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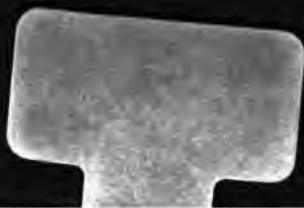
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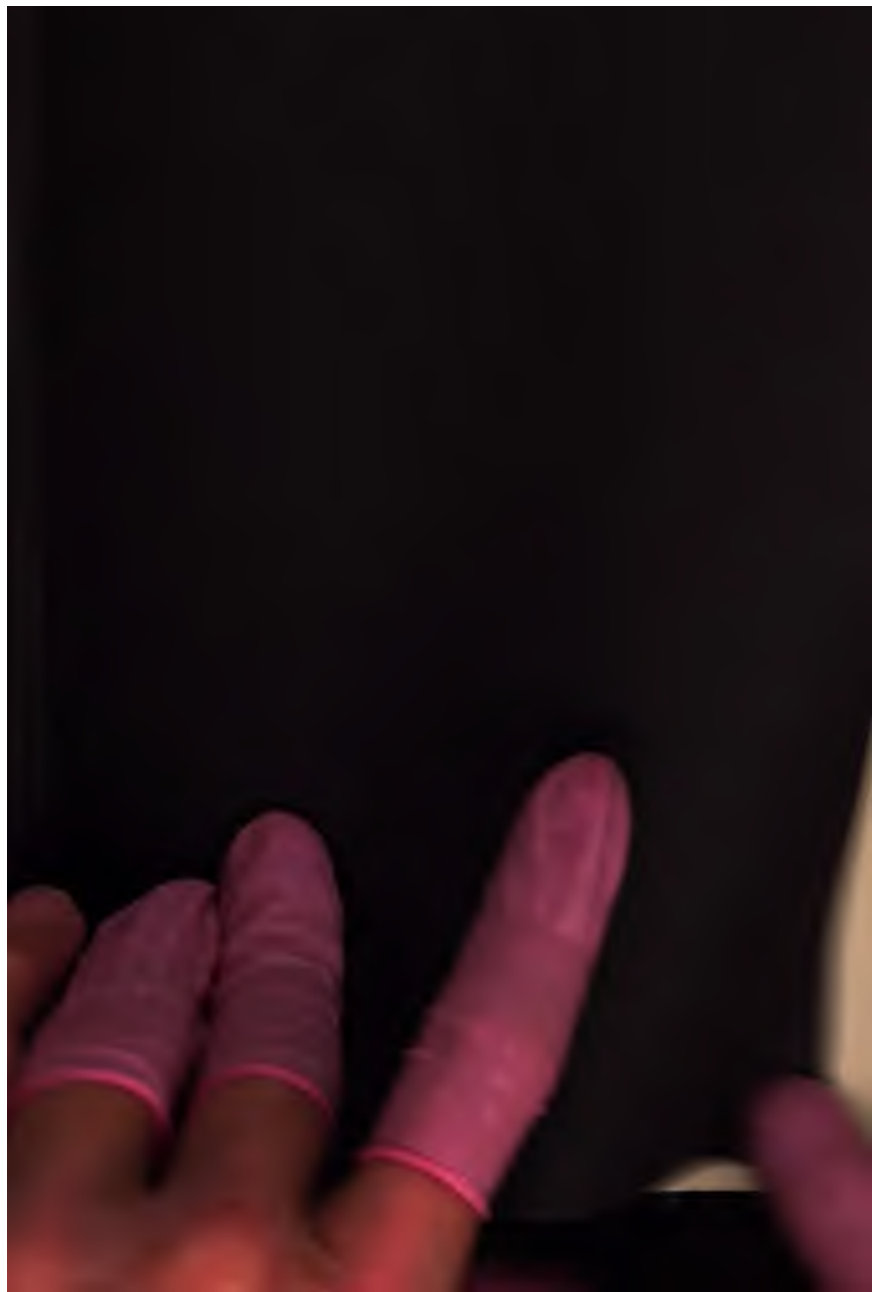
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STRAY PAPERS ON EDUCATION

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STRAY
PAPERS ON EDUCATION
AND
SCENES FROM SCHOOL LIFE

By B. H.

" Each adds his quota to the sum of life "

LONDON
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTERS SQUARE
1883

260. g. 494.



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PREFACE.

THE following papers were written by one who had had many years' experience in school work. During long weeks of enforced rest, many a weary hour was more than pleasantly occupied in dwelling on incidents of the past, recalled with never-failing interest and loving sympathy.

The more serious papers were written by request, and in the hope that truths, of which she had been convinced, by long practical experience, might be found to be useful to the parents as well as to the teachers of the boys she loved so well.

The scenes from school life she would from time to time amuse herself by writing, putting herself into a boy's position, and trying to realize school life from his point of view. It is

uncertain whether they were intended by the writer to be published; but as they serve to illustrate many of her theories, it has been thought well to include them with the rest.

Some of the papers may seem in a somewhat unfinished state, but it should be borne in mind that the writer was called to her rest in the midst of her work, leaving them unrevised.

It is hardly necessary to say that the actors in all the scenes have been made unrecognizable to outsiders, by change of name.

BELL FARM,
1883.

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PART I.

“And, in short measures, life may perfect be.”



STRAY PAPERS ON EDUCATION.

CHAPTER I.

KINDNESS.

A MODERN writer has said in a chapter on kindness, that it "adds sweetness to everything. It is kindness that makes life's capabilities to blossom, and paints them in cheery hues, and endows them with their invigorating fragrance. Whether it waits on its superiors, or ministers to its inferiors, or disports itself with its equals, its work is marked by a prodigality which the strictest discretion cannot blame. It does unnecessary work, which, when done, looks the most necessary work that could be. If it goes to soothe sorrow, it does more than soothe it. If it relieves a want, it cannot do so without

doing more than relieve it. Even where it is economical in what it gives, it is not economical in the gracefulness with which it gives. . . . The secret impulse out of which kindness acts is an instinct which is the noblest part of ourselves, the most undoubted remnant of the image of God, which was given us at the first. It is the nobility of man. It runs up into eternal mysteries. It is a divine thing rather than a human, because it springs from the soul of man, just at the point where the divine image was graven deepest."

Pondering much on the subject upon which you asked me to write, I came across these words, with much more to the same purpose, and it struck me, that perhaps here lies the key that will unlock the difficulties of education. At any rate, I place it at the head of my remarks, and though I will do my best to carry out your wishes, I would refer you always to my quotation, as embodying the great beginning and end of the work of training children.

My experience, as you know, has lain almost exclusively amongst boys. I cannot write an

essay on education ; but if the results of my experience can be of any use to you, I shall be most glad. I can only dot down suggestions, as they occur to me ; you will not look for a treatise.

The first necessity in ourselves is love. Love towards the children committed to our care. Without it, duties are irksome, and lack heart and interest ; they cannot be rightly performed if they are perfunctory. We become mere machines, and failure in our work is inevitable. We may become to our children abstractions, representing in a statuesque way, the different virtues ; but, without love, we can never be a warm winning loving influence, to which a child clings with all the tender strength of a child-nature.

It is not always easy to love other people's children ; they have very often habits and peculiarities that induce dislike rather than love. But there is in childhood itself an innate attractiveness, and even when marred by ill training and bad habits, the real beauty shines out in gleams from time to time, and we see at

least what the child would be under better influences. We are then spurred to fresh efforts, and we find ourselves drawn towards the object of our care, with growing interest and tenderness ; something very like love is sure to follow. Besides, we have the thought of Him Who for our sakes became a child. To win one little one to a likeness of His most Holy Childhood, is angel's work. We could not do this coldly or unlovingly.

Is it so difficult to love, after all? We have a modern fashion of speaking of love, as if it were something beyond our power to give, or withhold ; for whose use, or misuse, nobody is responsible. Its flights are supposed to be too lofty for the curb of duty ; it is to have laws and customs of its own, to which all are to yield ; to please itself being the first and highest aim. If we may take the books of the day for our leaders and instructors, this is the modern theory of love.

Deep in the heart of every true woman lies the mother-instinct ; hidden, it may be, and ignored, till some claims upon her strength and

care call it into life. Devotion is every woman's vocation ; and her great capacity for love is God's gift to her. To be the centre of home delights, cherishing, comforting, strengthening, this is her true vocation ; and we see how women, whose earlier years were objectless or self-absorbed, will respond with most unselfish devotion to the claims of home. The husband's love, and the touch of baby hands, have brought out hidden treasures of love that lay concealed till now. We look on, wondering : " We did not know she had it in her," we say.

Every woman's heart is endowed thus. If the love of husband and children be denied her, she is not therefore exempt on the side of the affections, and she is not therefore free from deep responsibility in their use. There are so many single women in this England of ours ! Is all this treasure of love to lie wasting, and in so many cases to shrivel up, for want of objects on which to lavish it ?

Yet what need of love there is on all sides of us ! Sorrows and miseries that only love can heal and soothe ; fields of work, and the promise

of a plentiful harvest ; but the labourers—so few, and those who are free to labour hanging back, absorbed by lower aims, frittering God's gift, and missing their life's true end and use.

Love wins love, and even on earth the reward is not wanting. But is it not enough, if He say of us in that day, "She hath done what she could" ?

To be kind to children is almost an instinct with us. Very rough people have a gentle tone for a child ; but careful, unfailing kindness is not common.

To cultivate kindness, in tone and manner, is very important in all intercourse with children ; but it must be deeper than that. If it does not spring from a source of love in ourselves, it will not be lasting, or real. It must be something a child can trust in, and turn to, with unfailing confidence. If it is only surface kindness, it will fail in emergency, and perhaps when it is most needed.

In an atmosphere of real love and kindness a child will expand and grow, as a flower in sweet air and sunshine.

Real kindness does not give way under the pressure of annoyance, but we see how surface kindness does fail in troubles of this nature. A little fault that annoys, causes more vexation than a real fault of much graver character. Some little point on which we are specially sensitive is rubbed against, and we are disposed to rise up in wrath against the offender. We are too just to punish, but we are apt to let the weight of our annoyance fall on the culprit in words. We soothe ourselves, by making him share as much of our vexation as we can. It is not much for the most part ; if he did not "mean to do it," he cannot feel himself much in the wrong. A window carelessly broken, out of reach, does not matter, but let it be near our comfortable armchair, and writing-table, then it is another thing.

Men are more generous in this respect than women ; they are not such ready victims to detail in domestic affairs. A man calls out "Awkward fellow !" when a cup of coffee is spilled on the breakfast-cloth, and there the matter ends ; he thinks his wife's ill-suppressed

annoyance overdone, and hardly called for, by what, he says, is after all "merely accident." But to the feminine mind it means another clean table-cloth—and she is trying to keep down the washing bills; besides, the so-called "accident" happens very often indeed.

To be cleanly, and even dainty, in all such details, belongs to the gentlewoman. To bear with real kindness (not a polite pretence of it) a child's frequent infringement of our pet virtue, belongs, I had almost said, to the saint.

"But we must—at any cost of trouble to ourselves, and to them—train up our children in these careful habits of cleanliness, accuracy, attention, or any other point we like to assume?"

Yes, but we must remember that we are only training them. And as the baby's repeated falls, end at last in his learning to walk, so, let us hope it, a child's repeated failures at last end in his learning the lesson we have so patiently tried to teach him!

I would include in kindness a genial frank manner of acting and speaking. It is very attractive, and important to be cultivated, if it

is not natural. For the most part, kind gentle thoughts express themselves in look and tone. People much accustomed to teaching are apt to acquire a severe dictatorial style, as if all their experience lay in the region of children's faults, and they grow morose in consequence. This ought not to be, though very often beneath that repulsion and rough exterior will lie a depth of tenderness and sympathy, not very difficult to call out. Still, such a manner is to be deprecated, and where it is possible to do so, a kind genial manner—as we have said—should be cultivated.

To maintain this, when sorrow and secret cares are gnawing at our hearts; under the pressure of depressing headache, or weariness; when the tight-strung nerves are vibrating to every sound and movement; this is hard indeed, and needs no light power of self-control.

Women teachers should be especially on their guard, lest irritability betray them into injustice. If any such expression should occur, it should be recalled, and atoned for at once; a caressing touch, or kind word, is enough to do this

effectually. Children are quick and generous in such matters.

Sometimes the effort to be bright and cheery will bring its own reward, and, in spite of noise and nervous sensibilities, the discomfort and sense of illness will grow less and less as work goes on.

Some children are very sensitive about ill health in those placed over them, and will take great pains to avoid unnecessary noise or trouble ; but it would be wrong to draw upon this too much. Either morbid anxiety or callousness would be the probable result.

How hurtful a depressed or querulous tone is amongst children, I can vividly recall in my own experience. A lady, excellent in all respects, but often afflicted with this malady—for mental malady it must surely be—was the head of a school for girls. Slow of step, solemn of face, gloomy of aspect, clad even in sad-coloured garments, she would enter our school-room. The sunshine of the day fled at her approach, and the room grew dark with apprehensions, too soon, alas ! to be realized. The

stoutest hearts quailed, the most confident were cowed, and lessons, that a minute before gave no shadow of anxiety, now became a kind of terror. The whole morning went wrong, went from bad to worse, and ended in a chaos of returned lessons, and faulty exercises.

I am convinced that to some of the more sensitive children such a result was inevitable ; it was not possible to work hopefully in such an atmosphere of despair. Moreover, there is a stage of depression that lives and fattens upon miseries. That everything should go wrong is a kind of solace to it ; there is a solemn satisfaction, a dreary comfort, a sense of justification, in disasters heaped up and succeeding one another in rapid steps. Such a mood as this cannot see sunshine, and prefers darkness and chill—cannot look for success, but prefers disappointment, so that its full measure of misery may be swelled to the utmost. “ See,” it seems to say, “ this, and this, will show you why I was depressed.”

I would not be unduly hard upon this tendency. It may be that such moods belong to some real

suffering of mind and body, and that if we knew all, we should rather marvel that persons so afflicted could ever smile, not that they were ever sad.

We are bound to be very generous to others, but we may be hard upon ourselves in this matter ; and if we carefully search out the causes of such depression, we shall very often find they spring from some over-estimate of ourselves, some disappointment of self-love, or some very fanciful and unreal sorrow. Real suffering or real sorrow are not often at the root of these moods ; they are expressed in other ways, or not at all.

But to come back to our first point. Such tempers (I use the word advisedly, for is not "depression" sometimes a polite expression for ill humour ?) are hurtful to children. The work of a whole morning will often hang upon the tone of the teacher. If it is bright, the timid gain courage from it, and it spreads a happy contagion through the room.

To work cheerfully and hopefully, is to work successfully ; and children should feel that a

master or mistress is eager for their success, and that their own efforts are a source of joy and pleasure to those set over them, as indeed they are to themselves.

Few children honestly dislike work, fewer still cannot be taught to like it. All this depends upon the teacher. Besides, children are great imitators. If work, cheerfully done, is the order of the day, they will fall into it, and catch the tone of it ; soon wearying, it may be, of the constraint, but not so hopelessly weary that they cannot pick up again, and by degrees form a habit of industry.

Not the amount of work done, but the way in which it is done, is the great point.

If a sum has been neatly and carefully worked by a beginner, it is not of the *utmost* importance that every figure should be correct ; and while we admit a few errors, which, for example's sake, we may correct for the child, we should reward the work. The correctness will come later. The first effort of calculation, writing the figures, and working steadily to the end, is quite enough. To send a child back, with

figures crossed out, and bid him correct them (I speak of very young children), is a hard proceeding; his poor little brain has to pick out the dreadful "carryings," which are always meeting him, or escaping him, at every point as if on purpose to hinder his work; and to resume all this, when he had fondly hoped and thought his sum was done, is very discouraging. We must bear in mind that we are teaching children to use their tools. Finished work is yet very, very far off. Is it ever finished?

The very highest aim of education is to enable a man to educate himself. Certain faculties and capacities are to be trained, so that the owner of them may make full and good use of them. All details of work must be kept subservient to this one end. We hear education spoken of, as if it were a process of pouring facts into an empty head. Not what we give a child, but what he gains for himself, is the most useful education.

Nature, with some wise end in view no doubt, has endowed every healthy child with a tendency

to perpetual movement ; hands, feet, eyes, and tongue are never still. To bring these limbs into order, to train the shaky busy hands to steady exercise, to teach the roving eyes to settle to the word or page, to bring all this complicated machinery into harmonious response to a governing will, to win the will itself by degrees to a cheerful submission to these restrictions, so opposed to the quivering activity of the child's nature,—this is no easy task. The first effort of mere attention is fraught with fatigue to the delicate brain ; and it should be carefully varied and limited, as fatigue beyond a certain point is hurtful, and if we overstrain to-day, we spoil our work for to-morrow. A child's "fidgettiness," as we term it, is very trying, but it must be overcome by degrees, as the brain grows stronger, and gains power of concentration.

There is a general impression amongst us that any one can teach a child to read, and we see inferior persons employed in this work. In truth, these first steps are of the greatest importance, and it would seem to me more reasonable to leave the later work to inferior hands.

Teachers of this class think it a simple matter to bring children through the alphabet and first lessons ; but what sort of teaching is it for the most part ? Usually it may be said of them, that "*les voyelles vont pour peu de chose, et les consonants pour rien du tout !*"

The organs are not trained to the correct enunciation of sound, the lips are not taught to move, labials are uttered with parted lips, vowels with closed lips ; *ent* is sounded *unt*, *al* becomes *ul*, and so on in a thousand varieties of inaccuracy, too voluminous for detail. This is how the foundation is laid for slovenly reading, and it is most difficult to remedy in later years.

We must be content with simply mechanical efforts and results at first, of hand, eye, memory. These are the tools for future work.

We hear much in these days of a child's "intelligent grasp" of a subject, and of limiting our teaching to what he can understand. The safest course is to let his understanding alone ; it will grow by itself, and as it wakes up by degrees, slowly and fitfully most likely, it will be good for it to find tools ready to use.

The exercise of memory is purely mechanical, and may be used freely. It lays in a store for future use, it will provide excellent food for the intelligence, and besides, it is a great source of pleasure to a child.

It is not wise to encourage children in asking questions to a great extent, nor to credit them with laudable desire for information. There is no hurry about information, it will come in time.

Some parents and elders seem to find a something quite sacred in the questions of their children, and I have seen a whole dinner-table kept waiting, that a child might be answered.

The gradual opening out of a child's intelligence as shown in his questions, is a delight to watch and guard, but it needs to be kept in bounds, as it will often encourage desultoriness and vanity. The old saying that little folks should be "seen and not heard," is quite out of date now. It had its good side, and perhaps on the whole did less harm when it was in force, than the present fashion of giving great prominence and notice to our little folk.

"Will you explain to me the meaning of *pianoforte*?" said an urchin of eight years old on one occasion.

"No, I cannot, and if I could, you would not be able to understand it."

"Oh yes, indeed! If you can explain it, I *know* I can understand it. My mamma explains everything to me!"

The poor mamma in question thought every wandering interrogation of her son claimed a full answer, in season and out of season, especially the latter. It made their society a terrible tax on the patience of their audience, but with a perseverance worthy of a better cause, she toiled on, quite blind to the fact that she was feeding her son's vanity, and aiding and abetting the desultoriness of mind, which in later life prevented his success in any undertaking.

All who have any experience in these educational matters, know that the real difficulties lie rather in the moral training than in the mechanical, and it is more easy to lay down rules for the former than the latter.

Children's faults and troublesome ways are

many, and if all are to be noticed and corrected as they arise, the child's life is one perpetual correction, a process alike wearisome to himself and others.

It is well to take one fault at a time, and deal with that, if we are satisfied it is a fault, and not merely the outcome of a child's exuberant, overflowing liveliness. Much we must pass by unnoticed, and wait for time to correct; indeed, patient waiting, and the careful building up of good habits, is the best remedy for children's faults.

Very grave faults can only be dealt with as they arise. Let a child see they are a source of sorrow to those set over him, and his generosity and love will be touched. To win him to help himself against what is wrong is of great moment.

I knew a mother once whose "children rise up and call her blessed." Her rule over them was this: they were a large family, endued with quick tempers and marked characters, strong in their own wills, and unruly. The mother was invariably gentle, very fragile in health and

appearance, and looking most unfit to keep order in that unruly assembly. She did it by taking upon herself the blame of their faults.* How this was found out I do not know, but it proved the very greatest constraint that could ever have been laid upon them, and the strongest wills amongst them would give way rather than be a cause of grief to the mother.

Nothing can justify scolding. Slight offences do not need it, heavy ones are beyond it.

We can make our own standard of blame with our children. If we choose to have it so, a look is enough, or a change of tone. "I am so sorry you did it!" I have seen a proud, rebellious temper break up into tears at these words, kindly said.

If a child's fault is met with anger, rough words, and scolding, he feels at once that he is "quits" with you, and he is roused to resentment and self-justification. I never heard the

* It has been suggested that this sentence may be misunderstood. Its meaning is that the mother used to grieve with her children over their faults; treating them as her own, on the ground that they were due to some failure in her training and example.

scolding that produced sorrow yet ; indeed, I never saw any good come of scolding, but much harm. Besides, the dose, to be effectual, must be stronger and stronger, or it will lose its effect.

Then comes the temptation to use sarcasm, and words that sting. This is utterly wrong. "There is a flagellation of the mind worse than any castigation of the body," says a modern writer on education. "The masters who resort to it call it satire. . . . Sarcasm and ridicule make the courageous feel callous and revengeful, and the sensitive oppressed and abused. It is an unmanly use of superior strength, so to lacerate the feelings of the defenceless. It is also dishonest and disloyal, for this engine of punishment finds no recognized place in the school code."

Perhaps it is this sense of taking an unfair advantage that makes a "jaw" so hateful to a boy. As an engine of terror it might be very effectual perhaps, but it should take no higher place in the category of punishments.

It is difficult to deal with children who have

grown hardened to rough words or rough usage. They do not move to carry out an order till they have been harshly spoken to; they seem not to hear a word gently spoken, still less to heed it.

"Your boys are not obedient," was said to a most excellent, devoted nurse. "Not obedient!" said nurse, with unfeigned astonishment; then, as if a new light dawned upon her, "Ah! but, you know, I make 'em mind me." So she did. If she gave an order that she knew, by experience, would be either wholly disregarded, or so tardily carried out that it was not possible to wait for it, she accompanied it with a personal attack—if one may say it; and until they felt her grip on their shoulder, not a boy amongst them moved. She called her boys obedient on the strength of it; and moreover, she believed them to be so.

Good, honest nurse! she never knew the trouble her darlings gave when once they left her fostering care, through this one defect, nor how hard it was to them, to learn later the lesson she had failed to teach them.

We can look for so little in children, but we must and do look for obedience. It is all they can give; it must be prompt, unquestioning, and entire.

Obedience is a child's first lesson, and he goes on learning it, step by step to the end. Perhaps this is the most directly heavenward of all lessons.

As obedience is the groundwork and test of our own lives in relation to the Highest Will, so is it with children in relation to ourselves. Our own unruly wills, ever straying aside in the pleasant paths of self-indulgence, are to be brought into steadfast, loving submission to the Supreme Will; and just in proportion as they are so brought, will our lives—instead of missing their true aim and end—fulfil them. There is no life, in any true sense of the word, no growth in goodness possible, without obedience. Fitful virtues, admirable qualities, all that is amiable and pleasant, may exist, but there is no trusting to them if obedience is wanting. There is a mystery in this virtue which we can hardly fathom here, but we look back upon that one

sinless Life, and we see that Its whole burden was obedience. The possible perfection of our own lives lies wrapped up, as it were, in the obedience of His. It is at once the means and the end of all perfection. Is it possible to overstate its importance ?

"It is making slaves or machines of our children," it is said, "because obedience in them is without motive. As they find a motive for it, they will practise it." True, the motive, whether love or fear, will come later, and prove great support to the habits already formed ; but the first necessity is the habit of obedience in little things. By these habits the will is trained to obedience, and when reason dawns, and temptations crowd thick and fast upon the will, it is already in a position to meet them. It is accustomed to obey, and the habit, not the reason, is the strong resisting power.

"I like my child to see why I exact obedience." Ah, what a train of weakness, vanity, and mischief, lies behind that so fair-seeming position ! Even practically it is utterly impossible to convince a child's reason, if we wish

him to do something he dislikes, and there is so much a child has to do that we cannot pause to argue about.

How would such a system answer in a family of nine children? Imagine only twenty-seven arguments per day, with doubtful results, of course! We can imagine an evening colloquy after this sort: "My dear, did Algie do the sum I left for him this morning?" "No, I am sorry to say he did not. I spent half an hour with him trying to convince him of the reason why those sums should be worked, and I failed—that is, I was called away to the nursery before I had time to satisfy his mind fully." No home could exist under such conditions as this; it would end in anarchy. Yet I have heard sensible people lay down this axiom, as if it were a whole volume of wisdom in itself.

Besides the good that results to a child from early habits of obedience, we must not forget the great harm that inevitably arises from the neglect of such habits. The will, unaccustomed to restraint, grows more and more unruly; it is left to itself, and to the fitful driving hither and

thither of any fancy or propensity that may be brought to bear upon it. The temper has full play, and the child is unhappy ; he is missing the wholesome, pleasant restraint, that really makes him a happy child. His own unrulèd will is his torment ; it is the most exacting of masters, the most unrelenting of tyrants. No restraint of ours can cramp him as this does, there is no freedom in such a childhood as this ; and how unfit he is to cope with trial and temptation in the life that lies before him !

CHAPTER II.

RELIGIOUS TEACHING.

I APPROACH very diffidently the subject of religious teaching; it is one of such extreme importance, that I may well hesitate to enter upon it. Again I would remind you that I write for those who train other people's children.

Into the sacred precincts of home teaching I do not venture, where mother's love seems to consecrate even holiest truths, and to press them home to the inmost recesses of a child's heart. Nay, even where the theology is not above question, the love seems to make all sound and wholesome, and her lessons spring into life and bloom.

The chief difficulty for us lies in the fact that we have mother's duties, without mother's love

to guide us, and therefore it is that we need more careful discipline, and earnest effort to guard us from mistakes.

This subject is the more difficult, because children come to us already taught. In many instances, some one special truth has been inculcated, to the exclusion of others. We have to deal very tenderly with what comes from home, but we cannot undertake to limit ourselves to that teaching; we have to launch out into wider fields.

In the matter of religion I believe boys are unlike girls. A girl's conduct is influenced by her religious convictions and emotions. She tries to regulate her daily life by them; she is disposed, more or less, according to circumstances, to bring her daily life into harmony with her belief. Not so a boy. Although his religious conviction may be deep and growing, it grows side by side with very grave faults. The faulty life does not mend, yet the religious life is not marred.

"Never measure a boy's religious life by his faults" I was told years ago, and I believe it

to be sound advice. What, then, is the value of his religious convictions? it may be asked; and it is a difficult question to answer. But one cannot live much with boys, without seeing that the two lives grow, as we said, side by side, without touching each other. The time will come when the strong curb of earnest religious faith will act; and then, when trial and temptation come, the victory will be won. But, in the mean time, it seems to be the law of a boy's being that his religious life must be left in obscurity; we must not attempt to sound its depths, or draw it forth by emotions.

A girl's emotions lie near the surface; they are easily called out, and as easily calmed. But if the depths of a boy's religious life are stirred into emotion, it is a great risk, and we may do incalculable harm. I do not think it would be difficult to find a reason for this, if we consider the difference of the two natures.

The key-note of a boy's religion is reverence, and loyal obedience. Habitual reverence, of thought, word, and deed, to all placed over him. Honouring first his parents, so that no rough

word or slighting gesture should be permitted towards them ; and in them, and through them, he will honour God.

Another point I should think important, would be to bear in mind that we, children and all, are "called to be saints"—enrolled as saints in the roll call of Christianity.

One would suppose, to hear the glib way in which some children speak of being "wicked," with a kind of enjoyment, that the very opposite view of the case had been put before them, and that they had been "called to be sinners," and could not help themselves.

The children of our day are not generally taught reverence for holy things. It is sad to see the Bible flung down upon a table, and its leaves routed over as if it were a dictionary, or common lesson-book. Sad, too, it is to hear the rapid, and perhaps flippant style of reading it, as if it were a story-book, with light or ill-timed questions interspersed.

How one's heart sinks when these two well-known signs show that reverence, as a habit, has not been taught ! Yet nothing can be safely

entered upon without it ; it must be the very alphabet of religious teaching. We cannot enter upon divine truths until we have won a reverent approach to them. How shall we set about this ?

First, by teaching reverent handling of the Book. What, are the very covers sacred ? Yes, as the ark was sacred, from the divine things contained in it.

If we see irreverence, or fear it, we must take the Bible from its accustomed place, and replace it ourselves. We must read to the child, and not entrust his Bible to his keeping, till we feel assured he will at least try to touch it carefully, and guard it as no other book is guarded. It is not needful to say much about it : what we do will touch a child far more than what we say. Our own solemnity of manner over the Bible class, our reverent utterance of holy names, and the hush of the class, the absence of haste, the whole difference of tone between that and any other class, will sink deep into a child's heart, and we shall see him follow, and in time imitate it all.

Is this mere outside observance, a kind of pretence? No, for the mind will follow the external act.

It is not easy to teach reverence by only dwelling upon the awfulness of God, and the sanctity of His Word, and if we succeed in awaking the feeling we desire, we must still fall back upon habit, to support the conviction. One word or act of irreverence will nullify the most careful teaching. Nothing but living example, and the daily habit, will secure reverence.

We see how readily even quite little children catch this tone—it is one that comes very naturally to them; they are nearer the unseen than we, fresher from the Fount of purity, and so the language of heaven is their own.

To teach them reverence, or bring them back to it, if they have forgotten it, is not at all difficult.

It would take too much time to go into the many details which this subject suggests. One or two we may notice.

In popular school-books—pieces of poetry,

exercises, and the like—it is not at all uncommon to find quotations from the Bible, and free use of holy names. They should be, I think, passed by, unwritten and unsaid. Holy names and words cannot be written and uttered in the busy hum of school, without danger to reverence.

The most heedless children soon accept this rule. I have rarely known it infringed, and rarely have I found it necessary even to remind a child, when once he knew it as a rule.

It may be that much of the scepticism of the present day about the Bible is due to the want of early habits of reverence. Nothing is so strong in us as the convictions taught and practised by habit.

Irreverent modes of teaching holy things ; irreverent quotations of texts allowed from the Bible ; riddles, whose answers lie in its pages ; puzzles on Scripture subjects ; so-called Sunday games ;—these things are full of dangers, and if allowable at all—which I strongly doubt—should be only allowed under careful supervision, and only as long as a child's attention can be kept up. Faith and reverence are concerned, and

we dare not risk any, the very least, trifling with them.

It follows from what we have said, that if reverence is to be taught by habit, great care must be taken about private prayers. The time for prayers, and the forms of prayer, will be short, in proportion to the strength of the child, but the attitude throughout should be carefully kept. The child should not lounge, or look about, or yawn. Better put the prayers by altogether than have them said wearily. Perhaps we should say, "You are tired; let me say them for you to-night."

We should try to instil the feeling that God does not so much exact prayers from us, as that prayer and praise are something we can give to Him Who gives so much to us.

I find sometimes that children have hard thoughts about God, as if He were to be appeased by the prayers, and must have them all, whether they were tired or not. We must rouse their love, by bringing before them the great tenderness of our Father.

But to return to the prayers. Those in charge

of the prayer-time should kneel whilst the children kneel. The room should be very still. A servant passing to and fro, folding up clothes, or putting them away, is a sad hindrance to prayers. The short time of prayers should be free from any noise that can distract attention. We are trying to teach our children a lesson of holy fear, and we need all the help that silence can give.

You may say that if we succeed in getting a devout manner for holy reading, prayers, and services, yet, side by side with this, we may have wandering thoughts, and an inner irreverence. You may say also: "Do we not risk great unreality, to say the least—nay, do we not risk mocking God?"

Let us remember that our Lord was Himself a Child, beset with all a child's temptations. He knows that utter weariness of constraint, which belongs to the limits of a growing child. We may safely trust our children to His sympathy and love. We need not fear for them. Perhaps their play thoughts are fitter company for the angels than our imperfect

prayers. But the habit of reverence will check wandering thoughts or recall them; and by degrees, fitfully most likely, and very slowly, we may see the inner disposition follow on the outward act. We cannot ensure this, but we know no other way of teaching reverence.

We teach courtesy on this rule. A child is taught to say "Thank you," long before he can understand the claim upon his gratitude. He is taught deference to parents and elders in the same way. The lesson of gratitude is taught by "Thank you," and the lesson of courtesy by the outward act.

A child is what his habits make him. It is impossible to know much of children of the present day, without remarking how little these habits of deference to elders are cultivated at home. A generation or two ago, the fault was said to be the other way, and great coldness and stiffness of relation existed between parents and children. The more loving and friendly intercourse of the present day is surely safer and better, but it needs guarding round, and grounding upon reverence.

We must exact "honour" with love. Is the fault, after all, with the parents? Do they honour and fear, where fear and honour are due? Do they give largely and freely to Cæsar, and fail to give to God?

Then comes the question about church—the long service, the inevitable sermon, the no less inevitable weariness, and too often the dislike of church, following upon an immense love of it. For very little children, one would say that the relish for the going should be kept up by wholesome restriction; that it should not be much indulged, and a little child only allowed to be present, so long as a little effort of stillness and attention can be kept up. What more than this can a child give? That it is worship, in some sense best known to the angels, we need not doubt.

It is harder to deal with the distaste, nay, dislike of church, that comes later. Part of this may be attributed to the physical suffering caused by foul air, part to a mistaken idea about worship. If a child has been taught that his play thoughts are wicked in church, and

that God is angry if he does not pay attention, the long hour and a half may well seem to him a dreary piling up of sin, and his condition after church much worse than before. But if we teach him that he has something he can give to God, with the angels, something God loves to have from him, and asks him for, he will perhaps use more effort.

Our teaching of worship must be, "Give, give! If you have only weariness, and a longing for the end—well, give that. Our Lord knows all. Do your very best. He knows you are only a child. Tell Him how tired you are. He has felt it all. There is so little we can give Him; but give something, and give heartily."

In my own young days, the main idea of church-going was to get and gain for one's self. It fell very heavily on the poor little sufferers. The responsibility of following the prayers and listening to the sermon was oppressive, and the sense of being wicked, was added to the rest.

But the children of the present day are better off. Shorter services, and many hymns, are great helps to them; perhaps, too, the hymns

enable a child to feel that he can do something. One great hardship at church is that he has so little to do.

Schemes for passing the time of service pleasantly, with pictures, books, and lounging, I should condemn. Such devices only put off the lesson that must be learnt, sooner or later; namely, that with courage and effort, weariness itself must be overcome. Nothing fatigues a child so soon as lounging and giving way to fatigue. We may give a good deal of sympathy and help to the poor children; but we must bring them by degrees to endurance, and we can perhaps enlist their courage in the effort. We can feel for them, and soften away as much as possible the hardship, but we must not pamper them.

It was the fashion some years ago, amongst good people of certain views, to bring religious talk, in season and out of season, to bear upon the daily events of life. It was called "improving the occasion." There were stock phrases, which were twisted to meet the occasion to be improved, with more or less suitability—generally less.

Perhaps grown people did not mind this ; they could reciprocate another phrase—"Cap it," as we say—and enjoy the sense of being themselves also equal to the occasion. But it fell hardly upon the poor children, who winced under it, and could say nothing.

Into what sad dilemmas these good people brought themselves when the right thing would not come uppermost ; how they tortured themselves afterwards with having "missed an opportunity ;" and with what strange, it would seem even magical power they would invest these sayings, we cannot stay now to discuss. They are amply set forth in the biographies of that period, and their effect was mostly to foster irreverence, or promote hypocrisy in children.

I remember, when I was nine years old, the news came to us of the death of a cousin, a girl of my own age. Our letters at school were overlooked (a very bad custom), and my letter on this occasion was condemned as not saying anything to the point about this affliction.

The child amongst us who was most glib in quotation and reference took the lead in our

religious *séances*, and very much unreality ensued.

One child, a noisy creature, often in scrapes, used to count up her misdeeds with satisfaction, congratulating herself that she was far too naughty to furnish any biography, that should end in an affecting death. She had remarked that all the good children in her books died early, and she did not care to be an edifying subject.

Another I knew, who could readily draw tears from her audience by recounting death-bed scenes, in which she was herself the heroine.

All this was terribly unwholesome, but it was the system of the day amongst those who professed certain religious views.

Our children are not often exposed to this danger, but there are others to which they are exposed, by misapplication of religious truths, in which I would include all ill-timed application. To appeal to a child's religious belief, when he is under the influence of excitement, of temper, or of self-will, often turns the irritation on the wrong side, and he learns to associate his annoy-

ance with the example cited, or the precept enforced.

I once heard a fond mother, who found other expostulations fail, in a contest with her little daughter quote a hymn to her. "Hate little Kistian!" said the wee thing, stamping her foot ; "want baby's toy." The quotation was sadly out of place at the moment, but it might have come in usefully when the little one had calmed down.

It is dangerous to press home upon children applications from the Bible. It is much safer to let them work them out for themselves ; a sense of irritation and unfair advantage again rises up in the child's mind. Let Bible incidents stand on their own ground as great examples, but let them not be strained to a child's individual case. A mother can sometimes do this with impunity, but then she brings with her lesson so much love and tact, that no hard feeling remains behind.

Bible examples must be kept for general, not personal, application. The history and example of Joseph was so stressed in a family of quarrelsome boys, that they learned to look on him with

rancorous feelings ; for years he was a reproach to them, and they could not rid themselves of the association. The misapplication irritated them, though they did not know why.

Little Harry was reproved for leaving his dinner on his plate. "The little beggar-boy in the street would be very glad to have Harry's dinner," was said in a reproachful voice. Harry took the plate in his chubby hands and began to climb down from his chair. "Beggar-boy may have it ; me don't want it." But the beggar-boy was a fiction, a common instance of misapplication ; his being hungry did not lessen Harry's duty towards his own dinner, nor was the fact of his being hungry any reason why Harry should eat what the other wanted. Yet how commonly we find instances of this kind of (so-called) management of children.

Little Alfie was only three years old when he went with his mother, one afternoon, to a service held on the occasion of a school-feast. The clergyman spoke to the children very simply of our Lord's childhood, and pointed out how even little children could try and imitate Him. "The

child that runs the first minute mother calls will be like Him," said the speaker. Alfie listened to the end, and made no comment. When he reached home, he found on the lawn a certain waggon and horse, his favourite toy just then. This so beguiled the little fellow that he paid no heed to his mother, who called him from the window to go in. She called again; still no response; Alfie played on. "Oh, Alfie!" she said, reproachfully. The tone caught his ear, and he looked up. He hesitated for a moment, his blue eyes looking to her, then he said eagerly: "Did He come *dilekly minute* when His mother called Him?" "Yes, directly minute," was the answer. "Me coming," said the boy; and he placed his tiny foot on the first step that led to the door, leaving his waggon on the path behind him, and went indoors. Not a word had passed between them on the subject, the application was all his own.

I do not mean that religious truths and examples are never to be brought to bear upon a child's conduct, but it needs a very careful, loving hand to do it discreetly, and it is better still if

a child can be trained to do it for himself. Above all, we must carefully guard against rousing any irritable feeling by ill-timed applications. It touches too closely upon a child's inner life, where we may not tread heedlessly ; it is holy ground. We nourish it with holy truths, fortify it with highest examples, and fence it round with dogmas ; but for the rest, let it grow in silence and obscurity.

I have known children carefully guarded against any knowledge of hell, the evil spirit, the crucifixion, death, funerals, and the like ; but though we should rather dwell on subjects more suited to tender innocence, it would seem to be want of faith to put one truth before another, or keep back what pictures, talk, or a thousand things, must bring before them. Nay, so simple and easy do difficult subjects become, even when to our earthly eyes they seem ill adapted to a child's mind, that we can only suppose the angels take up the work and do it in their own way. The process of assimilation is hidden from us, so we do not see with what sweet, wholesome effects truths sink into their minds.

That the holy angels do guard our children, not their bodies only, but their minds, is a truth we should all cherish who have much to do with children ; it is full of comfort, and gives a special sacredness to our work. How if we mar their work by our want of faith ?

Then comes the question of Sunday. How do you keep Sunday ? At home it is easy enough ; the parents take their line, and work it in their own way ; but our case is very different.

First, we most likely have our own views of the subject, and our own customs too, which we cannot but cherish. How shall we harmonize these perhaps opposite views, without doing violence to our own convictions or to theirs ?

“ Let Sunday be the happy day of the week. Let Sunday toys be better than work-day ones ; keep the best books for Sunday reading ; and so on.” It sounds delightful ; but it is not quite easy to put it into practice away from home, where some children have been taught that all toys are sinful on Sundays, others that Sunday is the day of days for toys—nay, for cricket, balls, and tops !

First, I think it well to watch and wait, before establishing any rule about Sunday. We were waiting years ago in that way, and one Sunday, very early in our school career, we heard the following dialogue between two little boys :—

“I say,” said number one, in a very remonstrative tone, “it is wicked to paint that.”

“Wicked! Why, I always paint on Sunday, at home.”

“Yes, so do I, only not those kind of pictures.” I am afraid it was something out of *Punch* that he was at work upon. “Look here! paint *this*.”

This was a highly sensational page from a missionary paper. It set forth a gentleman in a tall hat and dress coat, preaching to a half-circle of wild-looking lightly clad natives, seated round him.

The profane little boy accepted the exchange, put away the *Punch*, and the two together soon worked a great change in the picture. Preacher and natives were decked in rainbow tints in a very few minutes. But the strange part of it was the satisfaction of the boys themselves in

the performance. That it was a religious work, and admirably suited for Sunday, neither could doubt, and they looked at it with a calm satisfaction, that was even more droll than the picture.

Such wide differences of belief and practice are in vogue. One little fellow tucked his Bible under his arm when he went into the fields on Sunday ; with a view to reading it, possibly. That could not, of course, be allowed ; neither could we listen to one who pleaded that at home they always played cricket on Sundays.

These two cases express the extremes. It is possible to smooth over difficulties, by reminding them that school can never be quite the same as home.

Of course, religious Sunday books and literature can only be allowed under careful supervision. Irreverence on Sunday is as bad as on any other day. Such books should perhaps be kept in one's own hands, and only given out when supervision can be given. I should suggest, too, a very careful weeding out of such books. We find in them but too often false doctrine, false sentiment, and a terrible mixing up of sacred and profane.

The naughty boy who ran away to sea, and was either drowned or converted, and the good boy who was a chorister, and died an improving death at home, have given way to literature not much more wholesome. I hardly venture to say it, but my own preference is for books—story-books, that is—with the religion left out, even for Sunday reading. I do not think a good deal of story, with a little religion wrapped up in it, is wholesome. Let fiction be fiction on its own grounds, but let religion be religion, pure and simple.

We seem in our own day to owe so much to literature of this mixed kind, that it is ungracious to condemn it. It has brought before us truths, that otherwise we should have failed to see. It came at a time when Church teaching was at a very low ebb ; it aided much in spreading a knowledge of such truth, and we most gratefully admit it. Yet let us hope its work is done, and that the unreality and surface taste for religious excitement that it engendered may pass away, and all that is noble and good remain.

CHAPTER III.

PUNISHMENTS.

IN our efforts to train children rightly, we are constantly met, and thwarted, by their utter forgetfulness and heedlessness.

Little rules and regulations are drawn up for their special observance and welfare. Nothing could be better—our system is perfect, and we look at it with great satisfaction. The children don't heed it at all; they ride over it rough-shod, they ignore it utterly, and then bewilder you with their simple unconsciousness of having given any offence. "Oh! but I quite forgot," is the ready answer to any remonstrance. It is a true answer; but at what age, or at what stage of their training does "quite forgot" cease to be an excuse, and how many "quite forgots" may,

on an average, be accepted in a day, without harm to a child, is a very difficult question to answer.

“You would not have forgotten that rule if I had promised you a toy or a cake.” “Oh no, of course not.” But that does not prove he could have remembered if he would. The cake or the toy appeals to the child’s strongest instincts ; the rule appeals to nothing at all. It is an arbitrary something, quite outside his experience ; nothing in him responds to it in any way, no effort would enable him to see a necessity for it. Whether its object is to escape a danger, to form a good habit or to avoid a bad one, it is equally beyond his grasp. To try and make children see anything from our point of view is a very hopeless task ; they do not learn from experience, and they do not look forward to the future.

A burnt child dreads the fire ; he associates the fire and the pain. A narrow *escape* of being burnt does not touch him ; and our precautions against such an accident are a mystery to him, because he cannot realize what he never has felt,

or, having felt it, he soon forgets it, as he forgets everything.

This happy forgetfulness is a provision of nature, we should not grudge it them. They could not be children and lack it; they live as the flowers live, happy in the sunshine, careless of sorrows to come. And when these do overtake them, they bow their heads, only to lift them up brighter and more beautiful, for the passing shower.

It is plain, then, that rules should be very simple and very few; they must be made, and they most certainly will be broken. Later on, and very gradually, a sense of duty and responsibility will grow, and rules will be better kept; but we must be patient, and not consider it an act of wilful disobedience when a rule is broken.

To be very particular about trifling faults is a great mistake—it has a bad effect on a child.

The quick frightened glance, when a glass is upset or a cup broken, is a painful revelation. No fracture, and no stain, is of as much consequence as a child's fearlessness; and if he dreads severity for a mere accident—even if caused

by his own carelessness—it speaks ill for the atmosphere in which he lives.

I have seen a child, not five years old, overwhelmed with distress at a stain upon his bib at luncheon. What can happen about grave faults, if such matters as these are subjects for severity !

True it is, that children trained in this way are orderly and pleasant in a house, but it is at the expense of higher and better qualities.

A child, to develop healthily, needs very much scope and freedom. He should be fearless, except where actual wrong is concerned ; and in a cramping and severe system, he is a brave fellow indeed who will come and own to any wrong done.

Let a child grow freely and healthily on all sides ; and though his noisy movements and capacity for mischief give a little trouble or annoyance, it is ample compensation, to see the clear fearless eye, the courage, and the confidence he places in those about him.

This fearlessness, courage, and confidence are a good foundation for the future. Restrictions there must be, in proportion to his age and

strength ; but they can be laid on him gently, though firmly, and they will not cramp the real freedom in which he lives.

To guard him from all petty and vexatious restrictions is our object. There is so much in the daily life of a happy child upon which "No" must be put ; compensation will be ample, if with this, real freedom is allowed.

Frequent censure is hurtful. The nurse's constant repetition of the word "naughty"—which she seems to fling out at random, as if it were certain to fit somebody—ends in utter callousness on the part of the children. The very word should be kept out of hearing altogether, it is a climax too sad for common use. What is there beyond ?

So with other epithets. To call a child idle, wilful, obstinate, deceitful, or naughty, is a grave mistake, it attaches itself to a sensitive child most painfully ; it cuts the ground from under his feet. He feels that he cannot escape his name, and henceforth the epithet is as much his own, as his name is his own.

The alternative to this sensitiveness, is indiffer-

ence and callousness. From whatever side we look at it, it is utterly wrong and hurtful. Besides, it is not true, and in applying such epithets, we do not ourselves believe the child really merits them, or we should despair: our fear is that his faults tend towards idleness, deceit, or the like.

Perhaps, if we trace our words back to their real source, we shall find that the tendency to attach epithets, or to call "bad names," as Dr. Watts puts it, arises from our own impatient, undisciplined temper. There is a satisfaction in rapping out an appropriate epithet, we are soothed and calmed at once! I doubt if one moment's pause would not doom our epithet, however appropriate, to perpetual oblivion, especially if it attributed a grave fault, or touched upon some tender part.

Oh, the grief of heart it is to see the poor head drooping, and to feel that one's shaft has gone home, and that we have wounded a sensitive spirit by our thoughtless impatience! There is no sorrow like it, and no humiliation more complete. It is difficult, and in some cases impossible, to remove the impression given; we

lose our place in a child's trust, or he deems himself to be hopelessly and irretrievably, what we have said he is. I do not mean that children reason this out, or that all feel alike, but this is certainly the tendency.

Punishments will of course vary according to age and circumstances, we can only remark generally upon them. When absolutely necessary (I would stress this point), they should bear some reference to the offence. A very few minutes of silence, or being debarred from play, or any trifling restriction, will suffice if we are seeking to impress the memory ; and punishment for childish offences does not, I conclude, aim at more than this. We wish him henceforth to associate the penalty with the fault, and to consider that the inconvenience or the annoyance, is a consequence of the forgetfulness.

A boy will soon forget this again—that is inevitable ; but we may wait patiently, and add to the restriction from time to time, till the effort to remember gets stronger.

I speak of little children ; an age comes when forgetfulness is more serious, and may lead to

more serious consequences ; but our efforts to subdue it must be very carefully adapted to the child's age, and to considerations of his natural aptitude for forgetting.

But even when punishment, later on, has to take a more severe form, we must be satisfied simply to punish ; it should be soon over, and no sense of disgrace should survive it.*

To expect children to be very sorry, and especially to expect them to keep up any sense of sorrow, is to ignore wholly what a child's nature is. Their feelings rise quickly to the occasion, but as quickly subside. They are sorry to have vexed one they love ; they are sorry to be punished ; they are sorry while a vague sense of mental pain hangs over them. But any sorrow for wrong done or right omitted, in the abstract, they are not capable of feeling ; that belongs to a still later age, and we are teaching them by punishment, to be sorry.

We may quite well accept the troubled look and bewildered air for sorrow ; it will do for

* Disgrace may attend, but should not survive the punishment.

the present. Sorrow is there for the moment, but we must not try to keep up the feeling ; that would be a mistake. A morbidly disposed child would suffer ; a callous child would grow hard ; a vain child would assume what he did not feel.

Long-sustained emotion is not possible ; we can only treat children as we find them, and we cannot, without very grave risk, seek to draw from them what they do not possess. As we have said before in these pages, our trust is not in the emotion, but in the habit of attention to rules, which we are seeking to inculcate ; emotion will help very little, and it is a mistake to accept it as any kind of atonement. The nurse's perfunctory dealing with the little criminal is well known to us—"Say you are sorry, then ;" and the required word being said, the little captive is set free. It is an easy way of settling matters, and perhaps nobody is the worse for it. But to inflict any, however light, punishment on a child, and add anger or displeasure as well, is very hard.

Displeasure, a cold voice, a clouded face,

and the wonted caress withheld, will do for moral offences, which perhaps scarcely should have any other kind of punishment; but for the light failures we have been considering, would be sadly out of place. The punishment is quite enough, and it should be brightly and kindly exacted. We may show that we are sorry for the necessity of inflicting it, by helping him to bear it; nay, it may be by helping him through with it. We do not punish because we are angry, but because we are bound to teach him a lesson. We are not angry over other lessons; why should this be an exception?

Moral offences—untruthfulness, impurity, unkindness, and the like—stand on other grounds and must be differently met. Whilst children are under the mother's eye, one would suppose her sorrow and pain would be the most fitting punishment; but we could not enter on such matters in these pages, except quite generally. But in all cases prolonged punishment is a great error. The same may be said of frequent punishments; they tend to harden, and make children reckless.

When flogging* is absolutely necessary, it should be administered kindly and dispassionately; it is soon over, and it never leaves any trace of resentment. It should be sparingly used, and from the moment it is over, all remembrance of it should be put away.

I remember a little fellow, in his first term at school, who would fall into an anguish if an imposition were given him. It would take him but a few minutes to write it; but he would break into floods of tears, and protest he was sorry, making the most appalling promises "never to do it again." This was unusual, and a great waste of emotion; but we found that at home this exhibition always got him off punishment, and great was his surprise to find us coolly putting aside his hysterical protestations, and exacting the imposition in their stead. He soon learned to take matters more philosophically, and became a brave little fellow at last.

Promises about "never doing it again" are

* This punishment was most repugnant to the feelings of the writer; seldom consented to, and then with the greatest pain.

these come under the head of
 to a promise, or to honour,
 allowed—they are beyond a child's
 together; and the ready "I promise"
 put aside. We could never depend
 promise being kept, and the possibility
 it cannot be entertained.

Parents have a dread of punishing their
 lest they should learn to look on them
 or dislike; I do not think experience
 bear them out in this fear. A punish-
 kindly and tenderly inflicted, is rather a
 which binds a child closer to those it loves.
 exercise of authority wins upon a child's
 once, and his better nature yields gladly,
 its first resistance, to what will help him
 be good. He does not love what is wrong,
 even when he falls into it. What is good and
 pure is nearer to him, and the effort to attain
 it, however weakly made, is an effort, after all.

To be good and to be happy is the same
 thing, and we find a grateful response when
 we put a child of attaining goodness.
 He misses his heedlessness and

ignorance ; and needs to be brought back to it again and again.

The truth is that a child's love should be mingled with fear ; it is not perfect without it, though the fashion of the present day tends to ignore this truth. If the relation between parent and child is the counterpart of that between the soul and its Creator, fear must enter into it. "To fear Him and to love Him."

It is not by chance that fear comes before love. Love without fear lacks strength, probably ; and certainly it is apt to lack reverence, and so it ranks rather as an emotion than as a living power. A child may be very loving and caressing, yet wholly fail to be obedient ; his love needs the wholesome restraint of fear.

We not unfrequently hear fear spoken of as a lower attribute. "It is a slave's part to fear," it is said. But though the talk of the day is against it, we cannot lightly give it up. We are told, on high authority, of a fear which is "the beginning of wisdom."

Some royal road to perfection is said to have been discovered, to which intellectual culture

and free play of the affections will bring us ; but the old tried road is the safest. It is the way the saints have trod, and their way leads up and on to the "perfect love" that alone "casteth out fear."

Fear—this kind of fear exists with entire love and trust ; they strengthen and support each other ; neither is perfect without the other. True, it belongs to our fallen state ; but then, in dealing with children, we deal with fallen natures ; and very early we see the struggle of self-will, and the passionate attempt at all hazards to gratify it. The same work of discipline our own souls need to bring them to a higher level year by year ; the same restraint of holy fear our children need ; and if, through weakness or misjudging tenderness, we hold back and shrink, we cruelly betray the trust committed to us, and our children are the sufferers.

Children are said to be very keen upon an injustice, and very quick to resent it. That will depend mainly, I think, upon home training. A child's natural capacity for balancing one thing against another is small, and he is so easily

overwhelmed by considerations with which justice has little enough to do, that I have never been able to satisfy myself that the remark is generally true. The most salient instances that come to my memory are those where a child has clamoured for his own rights. Abstract justice, where the decision would be against himself, I think, would fare badly ; but no doubt there are exceptions, and some children, we will grant, have a great sense of justice. When this is made a ground for dealing justly with them, it is clearly a false one. We act justly because it is just and right to do so. To be just, is not more or less imperative whether children have a sense of it or no.

The practice of sharing out all good things, and taking care that each child gets no more or less than another, induces a system which is very troublesome, and children learn by it to establish themselves into a kind of court. An air of justice pervades it, but it is too often a protection for selfishness, and children are incapable of dealing fairly, where their own tastes and pleasures are concerned. It is a pity to let them

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assume any such power ; it is a pity to appeal to their sense of justice, as if they were capable of forming a judgment. Parents or elders alone can judge for them. They may be taught to be fair towards each other, but not to assume any power of judging what is fair.

A house full of children, whose natural sense of justice has been cultivated, is not a pleasant one to live in. If parents allow children to arrogate to themselves a capacity for judging, their own acts and decisions soon fall under the censure of the young ones. It is curious to see parents treat such cases with deference—with respect, even.

“He does not care about the cake ; it is the injustice that hurts him,” was said of a little fellow who was yelling at the top of his voice.

Certainly his sense of justice, if the noise was in any proportion to it, must have been very keen indeed. His eldest sister stood by, dispassionately administering the law, of the cake question, and eating in a very leisurely manner her own share of it. This happened to be the very bit under discussion ; and as the little one saw it

growing smaller and smaller under his sister's repeated bites, he filled the air with his cries. It almost looked as if the cake had more to do with it than the justice, but no doubt his mother knew best. At any rate, the imputation under which Maggie lay, of having her judgment warped by the craving of the flesh, did not in any degree lessen her enjoyment of the coveted morsel. No doubt her sense of rectitude added to her enjoyment. The outraged sense of justice (after praiseworthy efforts to console him, by appealing to his reasoning powers and his higher faculties) was carried off to the store-room; the consolations administered there were very effective, and the dear, sorry face soon exchanged smiles for tears.

It was an improving scene, and one gathered from it, and from others of the same kind, that kindness is better worth cultivating than justice; it covers all the ground, and leaves fewer openings for mistakes.

CHAPTER IV.

EMOTION.

AMONGST all the winning and gracious exhibitions of babyhood, perhaps nothing is quite so touching as the first waking up of pity in the little face. The rosy mouth quivering with the new sensation, and the eyes full of mimic sorrow,—how unreal, and yet how sweet to see! The sense of pity stirring in the heart of an unconscious baby must be so vague, it is the result of no experience.

What does it mean? Is it merely an imitation? No; it seems to be deeper than that. No doubt it begins in imitation; but sometimes the stirring of the emotion of pity depends on some external act. The habit of expressing pity for himself when hurt—a finger to be soothed or

petted, or a head to be made much of because it is hurt—has existed, possibly, for some time ; but this pity expressed for another's pain is a new experience. It is quite a new phase of feeling. Can we wonder if the nurse or mother indulges in repetition of this sweet play, and if imaginary subjects of pity are put before the child to bring it out? Where a kiss or caress are consolation enough, surely no harm can be done.

But, later on, there is much possible mischief lurking behind any, however apparently harmless, trifling with emotions ; and we must be on our guard, lest the pleasure of calling them into play for no special object, end in very sad harm. It involves some considerations too long for our pages here ; we can enter upon it only in a cursory way, accepting certain conclusions, not proving them, and adapting them to our subject.

We will assume then, that the sole object of emotion is to prompt and sustain action, (we speak of such emotions as love, pity, sorrow, and the like) ; that emotions possess no virtue in themselves ; and that, if indulged without corresponding acts flowing from them, they are

harmful. To waste an emotion by mere idle indulgence of it, is to weaken the very source of all our actions.

We see persons who indulge freely in emotions, to be generally weak of will and purpose ; they possess warm feelings and a power of lavish expression ; they pass, therefore, for the kindest people in the world, and the most delightful, And so they are. But place them where prompt action is necessary, bring them face to face with misery, and we shall often find that they are very useless indeed, sometimes even very selfish—though a cloak of kindest words is thrown over the selfish act. They are too much distressed to be of any use, and their fine feeling crushes them into incapacity. Is this an exaggeration ? Is it not more or less a common result of over-indulged feeling ? I mean, of course, emotion rested in, and indulged at the expense of action.

“ Passive impressions, often repeated, become weakened,” says Bishop Butler. No doubt corresponding actions keep up the supply of healthy emotions ; but, if these are wanting, the stream

flows more and more tardily, then ceases to flow at all.

We see this in the case of a nurse who enters upon a course of training for her profession. At first, the sight of wounds and suffering distresses her so deeply, that she turns sick and faint; by degrees, as she grows accustomed to the sad sights around her, and as her hands gain skill and firmness, she loses her keen sense of pity; she is no longer affected as at first. Why? Has she grown hard and insensible? No; but her first emotion has bloomed into action; she has exchanged pity for skill, she can alleviate suffering; so the first emotion has passed into a higher stage. She can do more than pity, she can act. In such a case the emotion finds its highest expression; it carries out the very object for which it exists, and the source of pity in such a case grows deeper and stronger. It does not express itself in words, maybe, but it does far more. Very lavish expressions of pity should be discouraged in children. Some act of kindness should be instantly set on foot, or there is danger of setting up a claim to great sensibility on very

inadequate grounds. The expressions may be very real and true, but they must be turned to account, and action alone will test them. A very trifling act is sufficient ; a kind word, or a touch, when more is not possible ; a remembrance in prayer ;—anything is enough, but children's emotions must be kept in bounds.

It is a mistake to teach them to pity sheep which are being driven to a butcher ; it is misplaced, because we must eat our mutton tomorrow. But pity for little birds, who can be fed with crumbs, is quite wholesome and right, and must be encouraged. So any kindness to dumb creatures is good ; it gives solidity to a boy's character, and develops many good and useful qualities.

I would not for a moment advocate any repression of loving words, caresses, and the like—nay, perhaps it is hardly too much to say that love may die without them ; but I would urge that they are not in themselves a sign of deep affection. Love must be supported and invigorated by a habit of careful attention to known wishes, readiness to do little acts of

service, and to yield up its own will. If the love is only shown in caresses, we may well suspect its depth.

On an evening not long ago, I saw a little boy of five years of age, in the midst of an entertainment, suddenly and inconveniently seize his mother round the neck, twist her head into a miserable and distorted attitude, and hold her in that dreadful position for a few minutes! We were fearful of the consequences, and disposed to fly to the rescue;—she emerged presently, rather squeezed and flushed, but her face tearful with gratified emotion. “He was such a loving little fellow!” she remarked presently. Mothers are so unaccountable; to a looker-on, the caress had all the appearance of an aggravated assault, of which her coiffure sustained the marks for the rest of the evening. The same child would not give up any trifling wish of his own to please his mother, nor obey her lightest word without compulsion.

Of course I would not assert that the measure of a child's love is his obedience, but love needs the support and strength of such a habit, lest it

become merely an emotion ; it wants to pass on to something higher, or it will not resist the wear and tear of temptation.

Mothers give so much, and get so little in return. Yes, I know it is difficult ; I know their joy is to give, and look for no return ; it is of the very essence of motherhood to give all freely, lavishly. But whilst their own love grows deeper, purer, and stronger, simply because they give so much, a child's love is in danger of growing weak because of the little claims upon its outward actions. Thus we see the children of the very fondest mothers often unloving, as if warm affections were not theirs to give.

But if emotions stirred are harmful, without actions springing from them, what can be said for the books—the children's books of the present day ?

What shall we say for the children who find books scarcely readable unless the excitement of the story is immense ? What for the writers, who year by year surpass each other in wonderful, not to say impossible, combinations of incidents ; where the excitement is piled up

higher and higher, and the final catastrophe exceeds all that has preceded it in its daring feats of ingenuity! Is the emotion of courage in no danger of being exhausted, if it be true that "passive impressions often repeated become weakened"? Danger there is, certainly, and of more than one kind. Our children are apt to become too dependent on books for amusement, and the result of this reading—now within every child's grasp—ends but too often in mental listlessness and great desultoriness. Children who make their own amusements are fresher and more original than those who read much.

We must however bear in mind that there are children of an apathetic and unimaginative turn, to whom it is beneficial to rouse slightly their emotional life, which otherwise would tend to utter collapse. It opens out to them a world of experience, and enables them to live a little higher than they are disposed to do.

Of course, books that relate to *living* instances of heroism and courage would be wholesome reading, and in showing what has been done, they point to what can be done. They serve

for examples, they are landmarks, they are often an era in a child's life.

Books that do not in any way appeal to the emotions would be very tedious ; and surprise, mirth, wonder, are very legitimate emotions to be stirred, and more suited to children's age and innocence than those which lie deeper.

So with poetry and tales of ancient heroes : they are so far above and beyond the level of this present life, that they do not clash with it, they tend to elevate it. Yet the contrast of everyday life keeps in check the dreaming and too vague effect, and each softens the other. Poetry of a high chivalrous tone has a very great effect in moulding the taste, and through it the character of boys ; but it should be undoubtedly high in its tone. Only the best poetry should be given to children, and even if it seems beyond them, it should still be the best. Vague sentimentalities, clothed in pretty verses, should be eschewed ; they spoil the taste. Well-chosen words, high sentiments, pure morality,—what a store for the memory these will prove ! And how, as intelligence grows and

deepens, will the meaning come out by degrees ; the verses forming a centre round which noble thoughts will cluster, a standard beneath which all baser tastes will flee away ashamed, and all that is high and manly will gather.

It is much pleasanter to trace out what may be the benefit of good reading, than to bring out the mischievous effect of what we will call doubtful reading. Under the last head we would put books dealing much in children's histories. The feats of schoolboys are not often beneficial reading for boys ; but of this we have spoken before, in another chapter.

It is difficult not to say too much, if one begins to condemn books of the present day. That they should be harmless—that they should be worth more than merely the amusement of the passing hour—that is, worth reading more than once—that a child should rise from them, not jaded with excitement, but refreshed and benefited,—this surely we may claim for our children's books.

CHAPTER V.

OBSTINACY.

By the time a child has earned for himself the epithet "obstinate," the chances are his will has been strengthened in many a contest, and he has found out for himself what a wonderful power lies in his simple "won't." I believe the development of this very unpleasant form of temper is due to the treatment of nurses and elders generally, and that the ordinary method of dealing with it is calculated to encourage the tendency most effectually. The first time a child finds out that his dogged persistency in claiming his own way attains the end he has in view, a new field opens out to him, and if he does not improve on the discovery, there is little to fear from his temper in that direction. Ob-

stinacy lives upon contest, thrives upon it, and spreads with the rapid growth attributed to ill weeds. It belongs generally to weakness of character, and is the only defence for the most part of a defenceless child. It is encouraged by use, and every contest in which a child's will is engaged, ends in favour of obstinacy. Even if he have to give way, the very strife has given fresh zest and strength to his power.

It is not wise to enter upon such a contest. The probability is that if we do pit our strength of will against a child's, we shall have to give in. His persistence, if he is really obstinate, will be reckless of consequences ; whereas we have considerations of health, perhaps, or expediency, to which we must yield. In such a case defeat seems to be on our side, victory on his ; an unlucky precedent to establish. He cannot appreciate the motives of our conduct, therefore he cannot fail to credit himself with success. True, we may explain to him at any length the reason of our yielding, but I have found invariably that explanations do not carry conviction with them to an immature mind.

What we do, not what we say, stamps our conduct on a child's mind. "You shall not leave the room till this is done or said." What is this but to challenge obstinacy, and to call up the very spirit it should be our effort to allay? No really obstinate child can resist such an invitation to battle ; his sullen face grows more sullen, and there is a dangerous gleam in his eye, showing that the excitement of the strife is pleasant to him. His whole attitude seems to say, "We shall see who wins ;" he does not doubt that he can hold out to the end. The exercise of the power within him is a real enjoyment to him. Pangs of hunger, of loneliness, of shame even (for little stabs of shame will visit him from time to time),—he can bear all this, and find a joy in bearing it, so completely has the evil spirit to which he yields taken possession of him. It is a bitter experience, and a hard slavery, but he feels only the eager passionate desire to conquer.

Some people have the happy art of not allowing children to be naughty ; it is one to be carefully and earnestly cultivated by those whose lives are spent with children. It would be difficult to say

wherein exactly the art lies ; perhaps partly in enabling a child to feel that we are very much in earnest about his faults, and that we are trying to enable him to help himself against them.

Little can be done without his co-operation, much can be done with it; and we can enable him to feel the joy that any conquest over evil will bring to us. He will learn to look for this, and day by day, as the good grows in him, he will become a happier child. Every time we can turn him aside from any evil temper, we have weakened the evil in him, and strengthened the good. Our object must be to build up by habit those good dispositions we desire to implant in him. This can be effected almost without the child being aware of what is going on ; it would be dangerous to set him to think of himself, his faults, or his virtues. The easy forgetfulness that belongs to that age is a great safeguard ; we may not venture to interfere with it, or try to overrule it.

A quick and ready sympathy is another great help in dealing with different tempers. We should seek to place ourselves on the child's

level ; see exactly what his trouble is, and look at the matter from his point of view. Many a sensitive child is wounded and thrown back upon himself, for want of just a little effort on the part of his elders to understand what his difficulty is ; yet on these little efforts much of a child's happiness may depend. To be happy is the first step towards being good, and if a child's natural temper is fretful, sensitive about trifles, and hard to please, we must train him in the habit of cheerfulness ; no good can thrive in a depressed and fretful atmosphere.

It would be impossible to lay down rules for the government of an obstinate temper, but one very safe rule would be never to call a child obstinate, or allow him to find out that he has such a temper. We have said that it lives upon contest and contradiction. A habit of prompt obedience is its best antidote, and when an obstinate fit is settling upon a child, some diversion of thought or occupation will often disperse it—especially an errand that will call out his kindness and willingness to oblige, or a window to be thrown open so as to change the air of the room.

True, I have seen the seat and the sulky temper resumed together, after a bright and glad acceptance of some such device of change ; still any simple expedient is worth trying, and the real triumph is, not a conquest of the child's will as the result of contest, but no contest at all. People act sometimes as if the yielding of the higher will were an act of weakness. The persistence is rather the weakness ; and we must not forget that example is a great element in our work of training. We must be on our guard lest we are found using the child's own weapon, if we carry persistence too far. To yield when no question of actual wrong is involved, may be our wisest course.

We must not undervalue the effort of yielding on a child's part. To a dogged proud temper it is no easy matter ; and if we, by kind help and sympathy can win him, with only half consent on his part, it may be to submission, we have begun to undermine the citadel, and slowly perhaps, and with occasional losses, we shall be masters of it in time. Patient loving help we must give, and we ourselves must be quite free

from any weak desire to conquer for conquest's sake. Perhaps no form of temper needs such self-control as this, or taxes patience more hardly.

There is a mental condition to which some children are liable, that looks like obstinacy, and it is difficult to believe it is beyond their control. A haze of utter hopeless incapacity settles upon the patient. Work that he could do yesterday intelligently, is to-day quite beyond him; he looks blankly at it, and at us, if we try to recall it to him. He does not seem to try to grasp it; all is blank vacancy. Is it naughtiness, or idleness, or what is it? Sometimes I have thought it a device of nature to shield the delicate brain from our too rough handling, and that the condition I have attempted to describe is beyond a child's control.

We smile at the fond mother who says her children are never naughty except when they are ill; but there is a great deal of truth in it, and she is not far wrong in treating sulky or passionate tempers with pilules and specifics. Careful watching of children's moods and pe-

cularities, will enable us to detect whether the health is in fault in seizures of this kind; a trifling derangement will account for it, though it cannot wholly excuse it. A child must learn to battle with fatigue and weariness, and by the help of carefully sustained attitudes of attention, his will must be trained to efforts of resistance; but it is the teacher's part to see that the delicate nerves are not overstrained, and to provide modifications of work that will satisfy school requirements, and spare the child as much as possible.

Nothing encourages weariness so much as lounging and inattention. We must here again insist upon the fact that the very position of the body influences the attitude of the mind.

A modern writer has said that a child's growth of mind and body is by fits and starts; a spell of growth, then a pause, with longer or shorter intervals,—that during the growing process much rest and sleep is needed, and that very much of the languor and distressing listlessness of a fast-growing child may be cured by doubling the time allowed for sleep. The wonderful way

in which children respond to the blessed action of sleep is evident enough. A twenty-four hours in bed will stave off many an impending illness ; but the greater difficulty is to meet the hours of waking in such cases, and to help a child to pass bravely and without deterioration through these trials of growth.

If what I have quoted above be true—and, at any rate, it commends itself to consideration—it may account for the inequality we observe in children, and the great gulf which lies between what they could do or understand yesterday, and what they can do to-day.

An obstinate temper is very frequently the accompaniment of a disposition without hopefulness, liable to depression, and easily discouraged. It is most important to cultivate a cheerful tone, a bright and pleasant manner, and a general cheeriness about trifles. A querulous tone and sad face encourage the morbid tendency to depression, as much as a bright look and manner will tend to dispel it. I should lay great stress upon this point ; it applies to the teacher quite as much as to the child. It is

curious to note at how early an age a depressed habit of sighing, with "Oh dears!" interspersed on the part of parents, will come out in the children. So with the bright face and ready smile. How easily children learn it and copy it, and how pleasant it is! How lightly cares and troubles, however real, lie upon the household whose rule is cheerfulness! How clouds disperse and grow beautiful under the sunshine of a joyous spirit! And where should we look for joy, if not in those whose hopes are fixed on the endless joy of the world to come?

But, especially to young teachers I would give a word of warning.

A child under the influence of a "stupid fit," is a very bad subject for any explanations; yet the conscientious young teacher is very apt to credit herself with a child's failure, and to feel that, if only she could make it clear, her pupil could grasp the difficult subject. Your explanations will fall upon his ear very much as so many beats of a drum. He cannot understand you, and Nature will take care, for the most part, that he does not try to do so. She is carefully

on guard just now, and though your kind efforts may produce a little irritation, no worse results will follow. Your words have no meaning to the dulled ear and brain. Make no further effort, but to-morrow try again, and perhaps you will find all clear. It may be remarked generally that explanations, beyond what are merely mechanical, or can be brought out by illustration, are a mistake. If a subject needs elaborate explanation, it is, I venture to think, safest left alone. A child's knowledge of words is so small that these are of themselves a puzzle to his brain, and besides the puzzle of your words, which confuses him, another puzzle is included, viz. your thought, or your subject. The pity would be if he tried to understand you, but for the most part it is too far beyond him.

Explanations that can be made by pictures, or any kind of mechanism, are good enough; but in our day, when children are overpressed, and allowed to know little smatterings of things far beyond their age, a general rule, *not* to explain, will be a safe one.

With regard to work, it is, I am sure, a very safe rule. We often say, "He can do it, but he does not understand it." The understanding will come later, by degrees, and without any effort of the boy's mind. The endeavour some children make to understand what is put before them, is a waste of power. We should not require of the delicate brain to spend itself thus; its forces must be husbanded, guarded, and kept for future use. It has play enough in aiding and controlling, and giving vigour to the many mechanical labours of a child. All the thousand processes of growth and development are drawing immensely upon its resources, and these are enough for its feeble powers. We have only to watch an active child through one day, to be enabled to realize what a constant draw upon the brain must be going on, as it is, of course, the origin of every movement and impulse. The tendency of education is to guide and restrain, rather than to stimulate, these movements.

CHAPTER VI.

TRUTH.

WHEN Pilate in that solemn hour asked, "What is truth?" he received no answer. His intellect, not his heart, was in the question. The Truth stood there before him, within range of his eye and touch. He was blind, and his hands were not pure. He could neither see nor feel. We cannot suppose that false judgment was his first judicial lie, nor that his hands were clean till then. Pilate's blindness would be the inevitable result of sin persisted in, especially if that sin were violation of the truth. Nothing blinds the inner sight and clearness of the soul as falsehood does. It obscures everything to us, till we cannot discern truth. It may stand, as in his case, close beside us, and we do not see it. In time we

cannot see it, and then the blindness is without hope as Pilate's was.

It has been said that no virtue can flourish where a lying spirit is ; it poisons all that it touches. When we remember from whom lying proceeds we can hardly doubt the truth of this ; nor can we over-estimate the fearful risk to the soul's eternal welfare, that is involved by any admission of such an enemy into our inner life.

Yet it is not easy to be quite true. Who that has striven earnestly to be "right stedfast, true in worde and deede," aye, and in thought too, which must be the source of truth, but has found it a hard thing ? And the deeper our love of it grows, and the deeper our perception of its beauty, so much the more must we feel the strife a hard one, and the demand upon ceaseless watchfulness a struggle to maintain in all the daily details of our lives.

If this is so with us, must we not most tenderly, and with solemn sense of responsibility, train our children in the practice and love of truth ; and watch with them, and for them, so that we may guard them from any taint of falsehood ?

"I never flog my boys, except for lies." How often have I heard this said—I hope it is not often done! A child's lie arises from vanity or timidity, or both; and though there may be cases where a lie affects the community life of a school, or is attended with especial circumstances in which flogging may be desirable, as a rule it is not a good remedy for untruthfulness.

By carefully noting the origin and motive of a falsehood, we may learn to estimate it justly, and deal with it accordingly; and, though in all cases it must be met and dealt with very seriously, we must bear in mind the nature of the temptation, and the extreme weakness of the tempted.

A bold strong boy is not so much exposed to this danger, unless his training has been bad, and he has been allowed to contract habits of reckless speaking, exaggeration, and the like. Such a character is open to appeals to generosity; he can see the meanness involved in boasting. The heroism and courage of truth-speaking will attract him and the exploits of heroes who have fought and died for truth;

until truth and courage will become blended in his mind inseparably. Falsehood will grow more and more cowardly in his apprehension, and stand as the avowed enemy of that honour which is the standard of all heroism.

There are many sides on which we may touch a brave boy, but the real difficulty lies in treating an irresolute timid nature, whose first impulse is to ensure safety for himself. Ruled by fears which possess and absorb him, too weak to look beyond the present moment, he does not even pause to think, he does not even look round to see whether it is possible to speak the truth, or even one-half of it. In a moment the false word is spoken ; yet, if his conscience is not seared, the lie he tells frightens him more than the truth could have done. He lies down at night oppressed and wretched, and his first waking thought is of his sin. Too sensitive to be happy in his falsehood, too weak to speak the truth and get back his peace of mind, his plight is indeed a sad one ; and he needs all the loving help and care it is possible to give, lest the little spark of conscience die out altogether.

What can we do in a case like this? Very much. I had almost said, everything.

Let us imagine the case of a sensitive boy in his first term at school. He is charged with some infraction of rule, or other fault.

Round him stand the boys, eager, waiting to know what will come of it. There stands, too, the head of the school, as Justice, scales in hand.

How lonely he feels, how bewildered and frightened! Before him a sea of consequences—unknown, vague, and therefore terrible.

He turns wildly for shelter and means of escape. How easy it seems simply to say "No," or "I did not do it"! Can we wonder if his courage fails him in such a crisis?

Perhaps, too, he is a well-taught, truthful boy. I mean that thus far he has been truthful. If so, very heavily will the anguish of that falsehood weigh upon him.

If he could have foreseen this misery, would he not have tried to avoid it? Perhaps not. Terror knows no law. Whilst it is in force every consideration is lost sight of. Now, at any rate, his mind is filled with fear, for no punishment could

give him the pain and misery that is upon him. He hesitates about his prayers ; he fears to close his eyes. He wonders if he is quite a wicked boy, doomed to follow bad courses, and end a guilty career with shame. He has read of such lives, whose first sin was a lie. I do not think it would be possible to exaggerate the misery a conscientious child will suffer in such a case. Unfortunately, he may forget the suffering, and, when the next temptation comes, fall again.

Very much depends upon the circumstances that surround the boy. If one who knows the truth, and his wretched failure, can now take him by the hand, and show him, firmly and kindly, the wrong he has done, all may be recalled and atoned for.

Confession, full and ample, must be made ; and if he still lack courage to do it for himself, it must be done for him, in the presence of all who heard the falsehood. It is a hard trial, but we have to teach our culprit that it is part of the consequences of a falsehood. However unwillingly he undergoes this penalty, he learns a lesson of reparation, and that the path of false-

hood is not a pleasant one. Perhaps too the possibility of overcoming his fears may suggest itself to him, and the way grow clearer for the future.

Boys can often help each other. A friendly nudge—"You know you did it ; go and say so." This is very encouraging, and the frightened boy stammers out his acknowledgment, "backed up," as he would say, "by the other fellows." And this achievement is much, because it paves the way to other victories, and any success, however trifling, is a blow aimed at falsehood.

By degrees, a sense of joy in having spoken the truth will come ; and whenever, although with quaking voice, and changing colour, and beating heart, he own his fault, a happiness unlike any other suffuses him. He has conquered fear—he has won a victory over himself ; and, by God's help, this is only one of many victories to come.

A habit of truth, and a love of it, grow up side by side in a child's mind, and soon—wonderfully soon, even when habits of untruthfulness have existed—lying will die out for

want of use, and in its place truth will grow and live.

Who can estimate rightly the courage of that timid "I did it," uttered in spite of fear?

The highest courage is that which triumphs over fear, not that which does not know what fear is; and the courage of a timid boy, when habit and principle have established it, will be more trustworthy than the natural fearlessness of a brave, bold boy.

I do not think it would be possible to overstate the importance of kindness and tenderness in dealing with this fault. We must be prepared for occasional failures, and work on. It is not difficult to be patient, where hope of attaining the end we have in view is strong and high as it should be.

Truth is naturally attractive to children; they have few motives to what is untrue, and it seems to belong to their age and innocence. No child doubts another's word, until the sad lesson of falsehood has been learned; and we may be quite sure that in few cases will watchfulness, care, and kind consideration fail to win a child

back to truth if he has lost it. It is worth any pains, any trouble, to effect this. If one secret falsehood lies festering in his memory, whether it is a living remorse or a half-forgotten sin, his whole life may be poisoned by it. One lie! it seems such a little thing, and yet what grave consequences may grow from it; and how all-important it is, if we cannot shield him from the first fall, to guard him from a second, by helping his remorse to become repentance.

Again, it is difficult to lay down rules on this matter. The wisest guide is love. From love will grow ready sympathy, enabling us to realize a child's difficulties, and the nature of his temptations. His vacillating strength needs support, and we must help him to act with the courage he is far from feeling: step by step he must be guided and assisted, very firmly, and without compromise, but very tenderly. We place ourselves on his level that we may aid his faltering steps, but we cannot pause there; he must move upward with us, for tender as we are to the sinner, we must be stern in our condemnation of the sin. There can be no doubt on that score.

We say a child must know the truth—he has only to say it; he knows if he has or has not done or said what is laid to his charge. Well, that is open to doubt. I question if a child, in a moment of terror and confusion, does really know; so many impulses are crowding upon him, and his mind cannot contain clearly more than one thing at a time. It is difficult for a matured mind, unless it can recall vividly its own earliest impressions, to conceive adequately what a cloudy atmosphere surrounds that of a child. His own experiences are so limited, he has yet so much to find out. Fiction and his own fancies are the strongest realities with which his mind is furnished; and these are blended so strangely, so grotesquely, with truth, that it is impossible to calculate which element predominates. It will settle itself in time, more or less slowly or rapidly, in proportion to other advances in knowledge and growth. One cannot live in any close intimacy with a child without finding out these strange combinations in it of truth and delusion. A very reticent child will keep them for years: no one knows of their

existence ; they are cherished in silence, and are given up silently, one after the other, as truth dawns, and his mind opens to perceive it.

I knew a little girl once who believed that angels rang the church bells. Sunday after Sunday she passed the open belfry where the ringers were pursuing their work, and it was long before the question came, "Who are those men, and what are they doing?" The answer was a shock, but it did not get rid of the delusion ; the old association still kept its hold. The ugly reality of those most unangelic ringers soon faded out, and the delusion lived on.

In another case a boy was punished for what he had not done. When the real offender came to light—when No. 1 was asked why he had owned to what he had not done—he said he could not be quite sure about it ; he did not think he had done it, but "they said he had." And so in many a case a child's "don't know" is true ; and it is better not to press the question, but to watch and wait.

Discovery is not all-important, and the great thing is to be quite sure of one's ground,

and to take the line that will most help the child.

It would not do to let his "don't know" exonerate him from all responsibilities. We must teach him to know, and enable him to lay down the fears which confuse his mind, and to disentangle them from the truth. This can only be a work of time, but as he gains confidence, it will most assuredly attain the end we are seeking.

There are very many ways in which children—alas, not children only!—violate truth, by half-confession, by allowing misconception, by exaggeration, and so on. We cannot go into these details, but there are some important points to be borne in mind.

The first is that a child's word should be accepted implicitly. If we have occasion to doubt it, we must renew the trust again, as if it had never been forfeited; to assume that a child is truthful, will greatly encourage him to become so. But how if the trust be again betrayed? Again and again, even to "seventy times seven," we must forgive and trust as if we had never been deceived. Not that this is likely to happen.

Falsehood cannot live in an atmosphere of trust and kindness ; it will die of shame—there will be no place for it.

Another very important point is to avoid asking questions. How often is the feeble spark of truth extinguished by a sudden question, when a little care and tenderness would have nursed it into a bright, steady flame !

If it is important to know the details of something that has happened, we should carefully avoid questions or accusations. If the child has really learnt to trust our kindness and fairness, it is enough to say, " Will you tell me what you know of so-and-so ? " And if we have the clue in our own hands, we can help him out, and so, by means even of his weakness perhaps, land him on a higher level of truth and courage. If we are met by positive denial or silence, we must wait, and leave it for another opportunity.

Perhaps, if we duly weigh the matter, we shall find that nothing is of such paramount importance as *checking* a falsehood ; and that, if we rashly, by our own want of thought, or still

more, by any harshness, lead a child to commit this sin, the blame must lie mainly with ourselves—a very serious matter indeed. By very easy and gradual stages a career of falsehood starts from very slight beginnings. We should be on our guard, lest success attend such beginnings.

To win our children to some faint likeness to the sinless Childhood must be our aim. If our own undisciplined tempers lead us astray, do we not risk “offending against one of His little ones”? Have we two codes of truth—one for them, and one for ourselves? Are we exacting with them, and lax with ourselves? This is a common case enough, and very puzzling for the children. If we may blamelessly allow ourselves a license we could not permit to them, shall we wonder if their discernment is at fault, or if they are confused between truth and falsehood?

We hear threats uttered that have no meaning; promises made that are not intended to be kept; charges brought lightly—that is, without evidence of their truth. “You have done so-and-so;” and, even after denial, the charge is persisted in. False excuses given, false reasons

for our conduct ; such reckless disregard of truth is most hurtful. In very many ways truth may be violated, and we ourselves may taint our children's minds by want of earnest care and thought.

A child's trust is so pure and beautiful, it is wicked to betray it. Who does not know the pleasure of seeing the frank, trustful eyes uplifted to one's face, without the shadow of a doubt to sully their purity ?

There is no trust like it. Who would lightly forfeit it ? Rather is it another motive, if one were needed, to guard our inmost thoughts and impulses, lest we should be led into any betrayal of the truth.

It is not easy to be quite true. We set out with that admission ; but in proportion as we ourselves strive for it earnestly and unceasingly, so will our children learn to value it. Our standard of truth will be theirs also. Our careful observance of the least trifle where truth is involved, will teach them a great lesson.

The very hush with which we invest the mere suspicion of falsehood will convey to them a

sense of its heinousness. We never speak **lightly** of a sin we hold in greatest dread.

So in a thousand ways may we train ourselves and our children into reverence and love of truth, always bearing in mind that His image is **best** reflected in the soul that is free from stain—the image of Him Who is “the Truth indeed.”

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CHAPTER VII.

CRICKET—ITS USES IN EDUCATION.

I COULD not write an essay on cricket, but I should like to add a few words to what the boys have said about it. If "lookers-on see most of the game," I, though I do not understand it, may have some thoughts about it.

You are all quite right in saying that cricket is a very pleasant game, both to the players and spectators. Besides the enjoyment one finds in green fields, sunshine, or grateful shade, there is the brisk movement of young healthy limbs—the rapid run, the excited shout, the catch so well tried for, even if missed, and the ring of the bat as the ball bounds off it, and flies through the air. This, if one is at a safe distance (for I look upon that ball as a terrible engine of

destruction), is delightful, but there is more behind it that is better still,—there is the discipline of the game ; the readiness to take the place assigned to each man by the captain ; the manful sticking to his post, whether the balls come thick and fast, or only at rare intervals ; the silence and steady attention, even when long fielding has made a little one weary. How often does a boy's longing thought fly to the hedge, where young birds are hatching, or to that bough in the shade, where he could swing his legs in such happy idleness, instead of toiling after the ever-escaping ball ! Buttercups lifting up their golden petals, asking to be gathered ; gay moths flitting by, just within reach of catching, and just the very moths we want for our collection ;—these, and many such tempting joys, come across the young cricketer's path. But he resists them all, he stands steady to his game.

The great joy of cricket is the batting ; that is worth waiting for, worth toiling for, and it comes at last. Bat in hand, how lovingly he poises it, and strokes it, as if coaxing it to bring

him runs! Perhaps the game is going badly, and he hopes to put up the score by his innings. "I think I may count on twenty runs," he says to himself, and he takes his place at the wickets. Very warily, very steadily, he receives his balls; he cannot afford to play rashly—too much is at stake. All in vain! The third ball sees his bails off, and he is out. He knows how his side looked to him; he is keenly disappointed for them and for himself; but he walks out of the game with a calm step, bat in hand, and no one amongst the lookers-on knows that if he were not such a big fellow he could cry with vexation. Cricket is teaching him self-command, and this will help him to be very patient with the little fellows, when their failures and mistakes try him.

It is very hard to see a good ball "muffed," or to run in for a catch and get knocked over by a little fellow, who could no more catch a ball than hit one. The boy who can say "Well tried!" under these circumstances, is a hero. But perhaps nothing makes such a demand on patience as the blunders of the young untried "umpire." He is only beginning to learn his

work, and his "out," or "not out," are said at random, in his confusion of mind, or alternately, in the forlorn hope that he may be right sometimes. This is really hard to bear patiently, and the loud call for a "new umpire" is heard, and the poor deposed one leaves his post with a crestfallen air. It needs so much practice to be able to judge accurately, and can only be taught and learnt with great patience and forbearance.

But if so much steadiness and self-command are necessary for the men, what must be said about the captain?—for it is to him they all look for tone and example.

What the captain is, for the most part the men will be; what he thinks right, they all think right; they all turn to the standard he places before them. His post, then, is a most important, because a most responsible one. Nothing better can be seen on a cricket-field than a captain who has, besides the qualities we have been speaking of, true courage and unselfishness. He must be unselfish because his aim must be, not pleasure or distinction for himself (he

may and will get a large share of these), but the perfection of his men. *Their* success must be *his* joy, and for that he must toil patiently, day after day, week after week. He must encourage the backward, and help on the young ones, carefully awarding blame and praise ; his men must learn to trust him, to look up to him ; and then, when the struggle comes, they will rally round him with a confidence and loyalty that will ensure success. A captain who loses heart when the game goes against his side, cannot keep his men together ; their spirits fall with his, and the whole band is disheartened. Success under such circumstances is almost impossible. A captain who is unselfish and courageous, can carry his men successfully through many an unequal match ; when the trial-time comes, his courage animates them, and they are emboldened to make mighty efforts, even against hope.

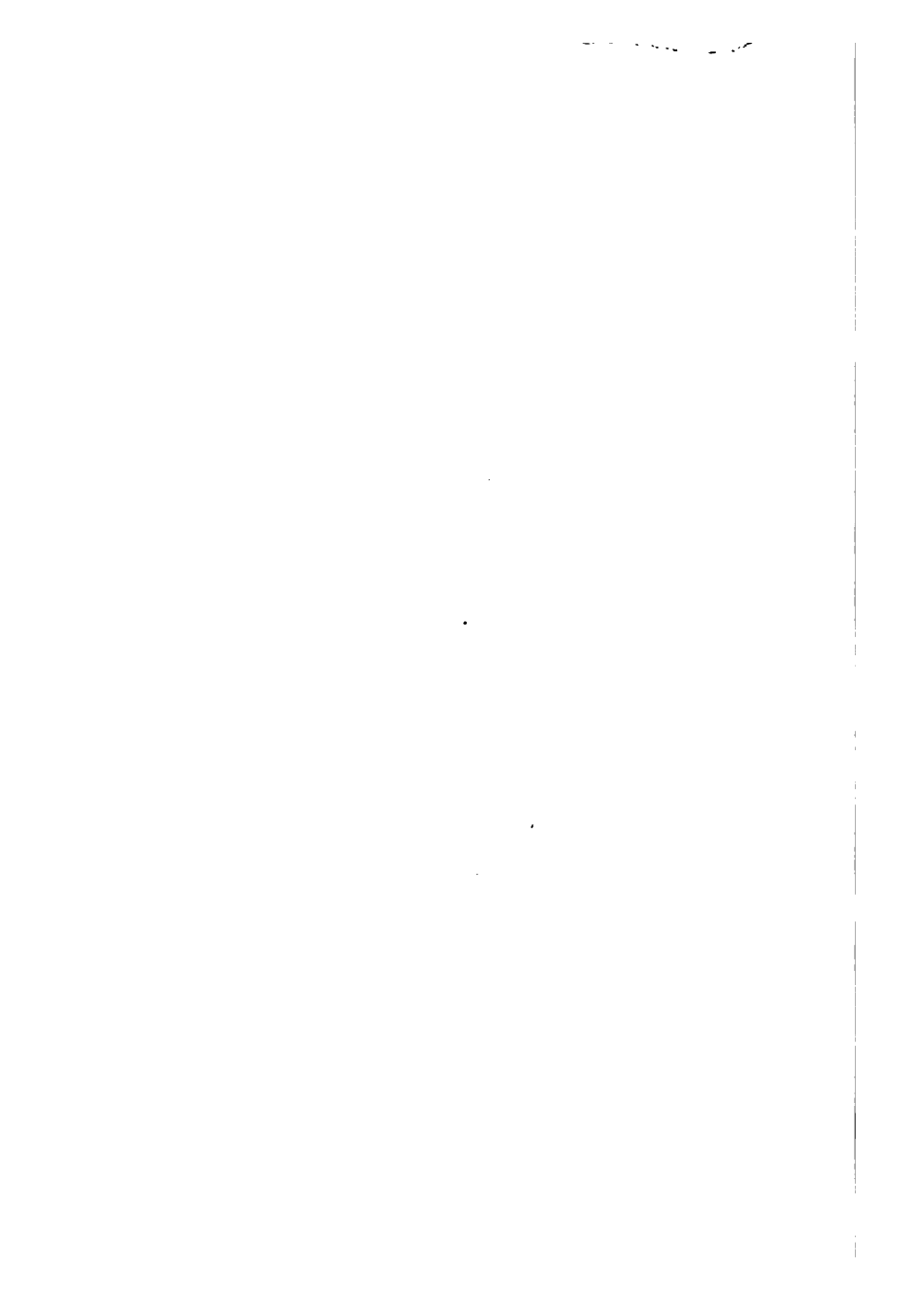
You will understand the kind of courage I speak of ; it goes deeper than the physical courage, which enables us to bear pain quietly. It is strong and even-tempered in the face of failure.

It maintains a steady, hopeful tone even when the enemy's score runs high, and the home-wickets are going down ominously fast. It has a pleasant word of encouragement, or a kind warning if necessary. It credits every man with doing his best, and takes more pride in that, than in a high score.

The daily practice games, therefore, are very important—the real tone and temper of the band are forming then—and there it is the captain should note carefully what his men can do. If his interest in the play ceases with his own batting, and he wanders out of the game, he loses a great chance of knowing what his men are about. This catch, that bye, the hit to leg that got three runs,—all this is to him matter of real living interest. All these details show him what he may expect of his men when the tussle comes, and when the honour of the eleven is at stake.

PART II.
SCENES FROM SCHOOL LIFE.

“ No sense have they of ills to come,
No care beyond to-day.”



CHAPTER I.

OUR SCHOOL.

WE are a boy's school. We are young, very eager, and full of grand projects. The books we read in playtime tell us what fine things boys can do ; how they can fight battles at tremendous odds, swim for any number of hours, board a man-of-war and take her as a prize ; how they can be shipwrecked delightfully, and with a few nails, a cask, and a ball of string, live in ease and comfort on a very desolate island indeed.

There must be a great deal more than we think for in climate. When we shoot at birds with a catapult, or the arrows we make for ourselves, we seldom do more than startle the birds, often not that ; whereas these happy

fellows live on the produce of their own shooting, and cook as by inspiration. This must be, as we said, the effect of climate, because we can't do it in England; and we know these books are true—true as books can be.

Another odd thing which belongs to all shipwrecked people, is the way they know the Latin names of plants and animals, and put them in brackets. We skip them, of course; but we feel it is very clever, and we can but think what an advantage these boys have over ourselves.

Once we had the measles at school, it was indeed a happy time. They read "Masterman Ready" to us. What a book it is, and how associated with the smell of oranges, of which we ate an incredible number during our illness! The pictures were delightful. Mr. Seagrave, in his best coat and neatly brushed hat, is always ready with the best advice and choicest Latin. No trying circumstances, not even Tommy's reckless adventures, can ever ruffle the serenity of that admirable man, or make him forget his Latin. We never wearied of this book. Even now, when I take it up to try and find

wherein its charm lay, I am loth to put it down again.

I have heard it said that the noisiest order of boy is a convalescent. No doubt we did our best to exemplify the saying. When we began to get better, we took regular exercise several times daily, by leaping from bed to bed all round the room. It must have been fearful down-stairs, but it agreed with us very well. It was hard for little Willie to have it all by himself, when we were well and at work again. He was reported to be a troublesome patient, and nurse said it was so like taking charge of a windmill. I don't know how they kept him in bed, unless they put a weight on him.

CHAPTER II.

SUNDAY.

IF Sundays had been all evenings we should have been very fond of them, but in the morning came Greek Testament or questions, which were often very tough and unpleasant, and then came church, and that was not all pleasure. I am not sure if our services could have been meant for boys originally, unless early Christian boys were very unlike us. We all found it more or less trying, but we did not grumble very much till one time—I think it was Lent—when a strange gentleman came from some incredible distance to preach at us on Sunday mornings. The vicar told us of his great kindness in taking all this trouble for our improvement, but I am afraid we boys, at least, felt it would be kinder of him

to stay at home. The weekly infliction went by the name of a "course." We did not know what that meant, but, once grown up, we made resolutions never willingly to encounter such a thing again all the rest of our lives. In his own parish he was much beloved, and that made it the more astonishing that he could leave it for us. We knew this because his eldest son, Peter, was one of our boys. A bold good fellow he was, too; but we told him if this went on we should certainly pay it out on him. This was hard, because Peter had to sit under the "course," like the rest of us, but with the additional misery of feeling that his own father was the offender.

One Sunday it was hot, the "course" had been of an unusually aggravating nature, for we had a lark's nest on hand, and the marauding farm-boy always marauded extra on Sunday mornings. No doubt it was for such as he that the sermon was especially intended, but he never went to church, he stole our birds and hidden treasures instead, sometimes bringing them back to us after an interval, and offering them to us for small sums of money. Perhaps

the treadmill would have been better adapted to his circumstances than the "course," which, after all, could do nobody any good.

We made Peter write to his father, and ask the meaning of some fearfully long and outlandish words which he used freely. This we thought would act as a hint. Not at all; a very long and clear explanation came by return of post. Peter was terribly annoyed. He had borne much, but this was more than mortal boy could put up with. So he held a council with us about what was next to be done. No doubt, for a clergyman, his father was a very difficult subject, and we felt trifling would be worse than useless. We made up a beautiful letter, couched in most respectful terms, but stating plainly that if the "course" went on, he, Peter, would run away from school, seek the nearest seaport, and engage himself as pirate to the first ship he found. He had always had a liking for the sea, and life at school, with a "course" in full career, was not to be endured by any English boy who could escape it. He then said that, knowing his father had other views for him, he feared

he might dislike the resolve he had taken. This was his only regret ; but even this was softened by the reflection that others would benefit by his line of conduct, and that even boys were sometimes called upon to make sacrifices for the good of others.

No answer came to this letter, but no doubt the matter got to the vicar's ears and frightened him, for the "course" ended abruptly, as all "courses" should, so we felt our letter had had some good result.

We were talking about this sermon business one afternoon, to Dot, who wanted to be a missionary, and some one said, "Awful work preaching, you know, Dot. If you are a missionary, you'll have to preach week-days and Sundays."

"Preach?" said Dot; "why, who to?"

"The natives, of course."

"Ah, but," said Dot, "I don't mean to have any natives."

"What are you going to do, then?"

"I'm going to be shipwrecked on a coral island—all missionaries are—and it's very jolly. I've read about it."

Now, this was a great satisfaction to us. Dot was a little black-eyed fellow, full of fun, and his sudden resolve to be a missionary had rather awed us. We thought it so good of him, and so like the boys in books, who are choristers and die young. We had never talked much about it, for we were fond of Dot; but after this conversation the subject lost all awe for us, and Dot lost all likeness to the good boys in the story-books.

CHAPTER III.

COVENTRY.

OUR worst punishment—amongst ourselves, I mean—is being sent to Coventry ; it is so hard a one, and falls so heavily, that we very seldom resort to it. I remember one instance of our doing it.

One day, late in spring, we found a wren's nest, built in the nook of a tree, which had been made by a branch lopped off. One of the elder boys—Mark, I think—found it, and “bagged” it. Bagging meant a great deal. The nest, in fact, was sacred to Mark, and it could only be touched with his permission. This was a very strong point amongst us. Perhaps the law of bagging was the first lesson a new boy had to learn, and it was one most rarely infringed.

We went every day to visit our treasure. There were five little ones hatched out, and they always looked pleased to see us. One Saturday afternoon, when we came up from cricket, we ran to look at it as usual. It was gone; not a trace of it. We looked carefully round; no sign of struggle, no feathers, no clue anywhere. We went in to tea full of wrath, and perturbed exceedingly.

We longed to get hold of Maggie, but in the mean time we poured out our trouble to Miss Mary. She was not very nice about it. We could see she was vexed, for she was always very keen about nests, and used to come every day and visit this one; but she said she could not pity us, because we encouraged bad characters about, and so it was no wonder if our nests were stolen. No doubt some of our friends had taken it.

This was hard, and that hit about "our friends" was really not fair. What actually happened was this. A man came one day into our field whilst we were playing, and told us a long story of his adventures. He was not at

all a beggar, but evidently a perfectly respectable man. He said his mother died when he was quite a little boy, and his father ill-used him, so he ran away to sea. He spent all his life on shipboard, and would have been made captain long ago (Greville said he should have thought an admiral) but for some enemy, who always turned up at the wrong moment, and spoiled everything. I am not sure if this enemy was his own father—I think not, because he was a bricklayer, and would not naturally have been on board. However, the best part of the story was that he was shipwrecked over and over again, so that it was quite lucky he had nothing to lose, as he would have lost it on every voyage. Besides all these misfortunes, he had a bad wound on his leg, which he got by being thrown on a rock once when he had to swim for his life. I forget whose fault it was that it never healed.

“Now, of course,” as Mark said (his father was a Q.C., and we thought Mark himself had talent enough to conduct any case; he had such a way of putting things), “the shipwrecks may

have been all shams ; but there was the wound on his leg"—for we all saw it, and advised his putting a bit of rag on it. He asked if we thought cook would find him a piece, so we showed him the way to the kitchen. We gave him all the loose money we had about us, and he seemed very grateful. Perhaps he missed his way to the kitchen, for the gardener found him prowling about (we said we thought *he'd* prowl about, if he had such a leg as that!), and sent him off pretty gruffly. Well, the first thing we heard next morning was that the larder and granary had been broken into in the night, and a great deal of food stolen. This was delightful ; but the gardener was very sulky about it, and said "so long as the young gentlemen" (sometimes we were "boys" when he was cross) "encouraged bad characters about, we must expect to be robbed. The wonder was we weren't all murdered in our beds."

This was too absurd ! Why should he accuse that poor man of being a murderer and robber ? We were very indignant indeed. Besides, we

had not in the least encouraged him. Indeed, we had advised him to go to the squire, who was a magistrate ; but for some reason he would not do this. Well, that said nothing. We don't like policemen ; but, as Mark said, "that doesn't show *us* to be thieves."

Happily we had given the sailor a commission to make us some boats, and we resolved to wait till he came back, and then investigate more closely his account of himself. Mark was great at this, and we held a court sometimes ourselves, one of us with his leg tied up representing the man, and so we tried the sailor with great solemnity ; but he always came off innocent. He has never appeared since, and that is what Miss Mary meant about our friends, and the rest of it. After tea, she put off lessons a few minutes that she might go with us, and thoroughly examine the spot where the nest had been ; but there was nothing to be seen. She was so sorry about it, that we quite forgave her unpleasant way of taking it at first.

We found Maggie before bedtime, and told her our grief. "Have you asked Walter?" she

said, "he knows all about it. I saw him with it in his hand."

Here was a business, indeed! We sent for him. He stammered, turned pale and red, and had not the courage to face one of us, nor even to repeat the lie he told at first. Maggie was so grieved to find into what trouble she had brought him, that we had some difficulty in appeasing her; indeed, we could not settle this affair till she was out of the way. Walter would not fight, and we had promised Maggie not to beat him; so we held a council under the trees, and decided to send him to Coventry for three days. At night, going to bed, no one spoke to him, nor at getting-up time, when tongues wagged freely enough. In class, the next day, Miss Mary might correct his mistakes herself; we neither listened to him nor spoke to him. How much she guessed of the real state of the case we did not know, but we knew she trusted us, and that she would be satisfied Walter was only getting his deserts.

At Bible-class after breakfast, the lesson was about St. Peter asking how often he should for-

give his brother. Miss Mary, without looking at us, said a few words about patience under injuries, and how our own forgiveness depended upon our forgiving others. She glanced once at Mark, who looked up and turned rather red. However, all through school that day, at meals and at play, Walter moped about alone, pale and miserable. If he had only had courage enough to come up and say he was sorry, all would have been put by ; but that he would not, or could not do. Detestable as his conduct had been—he had killed all the little birds—and angry though we were with him, we knew his punishment was a very heavy one.

Late that evening—Walter had asked leave to go to bed—we were sitting round the school-room window, waiting for the prayer-bell. It was a soft, still evening, and quite warm ; we were tired out, for the day had been almost hot, and trials were going on at cricket for the eleven. We were talking about this, but quietly, when Miss Mary came in. We all got up, hoping for a talk about the cricket, but that was not it. She put the cricket by, and stood amongst us,

evidently anxious to say something. The prayer-bell rang. Perhaps it was fancy, but something more solemn than usual seemed to be in the voice of the reader, in the very words, and in the hymn we sang. We gathered round for our "good nights," but Miss Mary kept us back.

"Boys, I want to speak to you. I have come from Walter, with a message." Mark made a quick gesture. She put her hand on his shoulder, and went on: "He says he cannot bear his punishment any longer, and he asks that you will release him." She spoke very slowly. Mark put out his hand to check a rising murmur of disapprobation. Miss Mary went on, looking at Mark, whose eyes were fixed on her face: "He says, instead of Coventry, will you let him have any number of lashes you may agree upon together, to be given him by any one or two boys whom you, Mark, may appoint."

"Oh yes!" cried a little fellow; "oh, do, Mark! And——"

Again Mark put out his hand for silence, and with a strange look gathering on his face, kept his eyes fixed on Miss Mary.

"What do you say, Mark?" There was a sort of pleading in her voice and in her face; we could see that in the dusk of the evening. "Well, Mark?"

Still he said nothing; but he grew uneasy under her fixed look, and, turning to us, spoke excitedly and unlike himself. "It was a bad, cruel act, and he deserves——"

"Yes, indeed," said Miss Mary, "a very cruel, wicked act."

"And Mark had bagged the nest," said a little champion, hotly.

"It was your nest, Mark; the wrong done was against you." Something unusual in her tone and manner struck us, and some remembrance of the morning lesson and talk flashed through our minds. We knew what was coming.

"You think——" said Mark, hesitating.

"I think he is very sorry, Mark—really sorry—and that he has suffered a great deal."

"Yes, I see," said Mark; but it was a hard struggle. It was an offence of the deepest dye, and one it was hard for schoolboys to forgive; but of course it ended so.

We all said "good night" to Miss Mary; I noticed she kept Mark's hand in her own, and his face showed what he meant to do. We all shook hands with Walter that night, and the last thing I heard after silence had been called, was his crying under the bed-clothes.

Mark and I were great friends, and the day after all this had happened we were talking together under the trees; it was too hot to do anything but talk. I had not been satisfied about Walter, and had said that if fellows got off lightly for things of that sort, I thought discipline would be at an end. "I could not make Miss Mary out last night," I added; "she was not like herself." Mark grew very serious, and told me a story of himself that I had never known before; he had been at school two years when I first came.

The sum-books in use at the school had the answers at the end of the book. It was taken as a matter of course that no boy would look at them till the sum was worked. It was a temptation, no doubt, but Miss Mary's system of trusting boys was in such full force that they

very rarely betrayed her trusts. Mark, in his first half, had brought up some sums he did not understand, with the answers right, he had "cribbed" them, in fact. I could fancy Miss Mary's indignation would be very hard to meet, and Mark said it was just dreadful. A failure of this kind touched the honour of the whole school, and when the boys went out at eleven indignation was loud and high, and a sentence of Coventry was passed.

When they came in for second school, Mark had never moved, nor lifted his head, which lay buried in his arms ; he was crying bitterly. Miss Mary came in, and went up to him, and lifting his head kindly, said, "Boys, he is very sorry, we will all forgive him, and in future remember that *I* answer for him."

What Mark was before that time I do not know, but in our day he was a fellow worthy of any trust, for he had answered bravely to Miss Mary's confidence.

It was kind of Mark to tell me this little story, and it seemed to explain what had puzzled me last night. "I don't think I was a

very truthful boy before that day," said Mark, warmly, "but I should have been a brute indeed if I had failed afterwards."

Walter left school soon afterwards. Neither punishment nor pardon had much effect on him. None of us liked him, or regretted him. He was really cruel. His last exploit was to throw a cat into the pond, and make another little fellow stand on the opposite side to himself, to prevent its getting out. Poor little Jamie thought it fine fun, especially as Walter declared nothing could drown a cat. Suddenly, to his horror, the poor brute turned on its side and died. Jamie ran crying indoors, buried his head in Maggie's lap, and sobbed bitterly. "I did not mean to do it, he said it would not be drowned." Poor little man! he took a great deal of comforting. As to Walter, he was sent to the woman who owned the cat (she was the carter's wife) to be scolded; so he was well punished, as he deserved. That woman *had* a tongue, and she kept him full twenty minutes!

CHAPTER IV.

LIVE THINGS.

WE are very fond of live things. We find many chrysalises, and keep them till they turn to moths. We keep caterpillars, too, of course ; but we have found out—and it is worth noting—that the lockers where our dictation-books and pens are kept, are *not* good places for them, for they will crawl out, and turn up where they are least expected or wanted.

We collect moths too, and we only kill what we want. The little fellows run at anything ; but still, of course, if the moths did not like it, they could keep out of the way.

Humming-bird moths we may not take, they are very rare, and they only come into the garden,

so they are considered sacred. With regard to birds' nests, we take eggs, but never to empty a nest, and we never take the nests till the birds are flown. Miss Mary is very quick at finding nests, though she will never climb a tree; but we know she could if she would try, but she has such crotchets. As we said, all women have them; but it is a pity. One of her crotchets is very disheartening, it is about throwing stones. We are not allowed to shy stones. What else are stones laid about for? When the village boys come to play cricket, Miss Mary is amazed to find how much better they throw up the ball than we do! Well, the reason is plain. All the way to school and all the way back again they throw stones, and all their play-time besides. Compare these advantages with ours!

One day a carter brought a duck to the house, lamed he said, with a stone, which he accused some of us of having thrown. All I can say is, that it would have been a great honour to the school, if it could have been proved against us. Why, not a boy amongst us

could hit a duck that was swimming away as any sensible duck would swim. We were all called upon to go and inspect the wounded creature, and the general belief among us was that it was shamming, it twinkled its green eye at us so oddly. Crestfallen enough, we all said "no" to the charge ; and I dare say the carter dined off it.

But to go back to our birds. We brought up a good many families, and some swallows, that built every year in our shed, always expected us to visit them, and give early Daddy-long-legs to the young brood. We used to give them their first lessons in flying. One summer we found a young cuckoo in a wren's nest, we did not know at first what it was. It was a beautifully marked bird, and took up the whole of the nest. The poor baby-wrens were lying dead in the ditch below. The cuckoo had a vile temper, and would heave its breast and scold at us in the most extraordinary way. We were afraid to touch it, but Miss Mary had gloves on, and took it out of the nest ; it made no attempt to use its wings, or get away from us, and we

gave it some dainty young caterpillars to eat. It was very voracious, and the poor parent-wrens looked starved and wearied out ; they were feeding it nearly all day. It was stolen at last, we suspected, by some men working in a field near.

We were well off for rats. At a neighbouring farm they seemed to keep ricks on purpose for sport, and we often joined the rat-hunt. Once we caught a great many mice, and brought them home with us. One of them I remember, ate rice-pudding out of a plate, as if he had been used to it all his life. He was a very superior mouse, and hid behind the wainscot of the schoolroom. He used to come on to the hearth when we were at work, and sit and watch us, as if he were anxious to learn a little on his own account. But the cook had an unnatural propensity for cats (we saw seven one frosty night sitting in a row before the kitchen fire), so that the mice had a poor chance indeed, and we soon lost them all.

The pond was such a place for frogs of all kinds, little and big, and they were for the most part very remarkable frogs. We caught several

one day and harnessed them to a truck we had made. We tried to teach an apathetic old frog to drive the team, but though he sat very well for a time, when we weren't looking he took sudden leaps into the water. Of course we soon had him out again, and he was really learning to sit still, when the school-bell rang. That was a way the bell had, of always ringing just the very moment it was not wanted. We were rather dirty, and had not many minutes to get ready for school, so we put the frogs into our pockets and ran in. We were hard at our construing when one of the brutes leaped out upon my Ovid, he must have done it for mischief. There seemed to be quite a plan amongst them, for two others jumped out, and one went straight into the ink. The noise was tremendous. Miss Mary laughed, but the frogs were ordered out into the garden. The worst of it was, that the old coachman had been put by himself into the soap-dish in our washing-room, and the lid put on. The housemaid lifted up the lid (women are so curious), and there sat the frog, staring at nothing particular. There was nothing

alarming in that, and she need not have screamed out, but women are so perverse and stupid. It was a pity to turn him out, for we had nearly taught him his business, but there was no help for it.

But perhaps the most stupid things of all to deal with, are worms. We found one day a large nest of ants' eggs, and we wanted to get them hatched. We looked about for a spider ; not one to be found ; and a blue-bottle was too fidgety. We were still searching about, when we spied a great worm idling his time away ; so we caught him, made a comfortable nest, put in the eggs and the worm on the top. He did not take to it ; perhaps worms are not adapted for hatching. When the evening came, the eggs were in the nest, but no worm. Of course he may have had family affairs that required his attention at home. Worms don't give the idea of family comforts and resources—they seem always loafing and dawdling about ; but we don't know much of their habits.

Once we had a guinea-pig. We bought her for one shilling and sixpence. It was a great

bargain, because in a very few days—a week at the longest, the man said—it would have young ones ; so that it was really buying a whole family, and it was cheap at the money. On that account the man would have liked two shillings and sixpence ; but we had not so much by us, and he very good naturedly took the one shilling and sixpence. We soon knocked a hutch together, and called our treasure Peggy.

I think he told us what food to give her, but I don't think he specified chocolate, sweet biscuits, or toffy. We gave her all these things besides her proper food, but for some reason or another she did not thrive. Perhaps toffy disagreed with her ; anyhow, she lost her spirits and moped about. Besides, there was the disappointment about the little family. Morning after morning we went to the hutch in vain ; yet the man had said it would not surprise him, if they were born the very day after we had her home. Three weeks passed away, and Peggy was still alone, no doubt this tried her spirits.

We consulted the farm-boy about her. He was of an erratic turn of mind, and said he preferred

birds himself. We knew he preferred ours. But he advised us to get a companion for Peggy, and offered us a wood-pigeon. He said he had a beauty he could let us have for two shillings. We knew by long experience that he only dealt in birds that were lame—whether from cramp, or constitutional causes, or accidents, we did not know ; but we refused the wood-pigeon decidedly. He then turned the subject over in his mind, and said a hedgehog was a comfortable animal to live with, and very sociable and pleasant when you once got used to it. He knew of an eligible hedgehog who lived near. We told him to bring it next day ; but he brought a rabbit instead, which he said was quite young and very valuable, besides being “oncommon lively, to be sure.” This was the point we felt most important. We placed all our faith in this attributed cheerfulness, and we bought the rabbit, I think for one shilling and ninepence. But this did not answer ; Peggy moped more than ever.

Perhaps we were mistaken in thinking the rabbit a really cheerful companion, and perhaps cheerfulness is not their strong point usually ;

individually Jupe had none to spare. I forget why we called him Jupe, unless it was short for Jupiter. He leaped about in an aimless way, which after a time grew quite melancholy. He never seemed to see Peggy ; he would leap over her head, and inconvenience her by squeezing her against the side of the hutch. Instead of cherishing her, as we hoped he would do, he showed no consideration whatever. His conduct was heartless and cruel, as the sequel will show.

One morning we found her dead. Jupe was leaping about as usual, in his foolish way ; he had never found out that Peggy was alive, and he now showed no sense of her being dead. I am afraid he was glad, for in our distress we gave him all the food we had, and he ate Peggy's share as well as his own. Of course this may have been his way of being sorry, but it looked very like indifference.

Peggy must be buried, and the necessity for making arrangements for the ceremony, consoled us greatly. It was an alleviation Jupe could not share ; but we determined that he should take his part at the funeral. If he is sorry, we

argued, it will be a comfort to him to show his respect ; if not, it will serve him right to make him take a little trouble about it. So we harnessed him to a truck we made, and on this truck we laid poor Peggy. The procession set out in due order, with a good following of boys, up the garden path, by way of the wood-yard, into the orchard, where a grave was dug in readiness.

It certainly looked like levity ; but it may have been that the parting was too much for Jupe, even in that solemn moment. He leaped from side to side the whole way up the garden, and it was all we could do to keep Peggy on her truck. To our consternation, on arriving at the grave, he leaped over it, and Peggy's entombment, to say the least of it, was premature. From that moment we lost all respect for Jupe, and the very next day we gave him back to the farm-boy, who soon sold him over again. It was our last experience of rabbits.

Science is not encouraged amongst us ; gun-powder, fireworks, and all opportunities for improving our minds with combustibles, are strictly forbidden ; so that we are, as a school,

behind boys of our age. We have pointed this out to Miss Mary, but she says the holidays afford ample time for these pursuits. One of our fellows had a very chemical turn of mind. He was spending his holidays at the seaside, and on wet days he went to a friendly chemist, who let him go to his books, and find out all about gunpowder. With the help of these important discoveries, and the purchase of a few harmless ingredients, he soon burnt off his eyebrows and the skin of his right-hand thumb. His mother grew anxious, but it was not till he nearly poisoned his little sister, that she forbade any more science. We could hardly blame her, poor lady, as she had only one daughter; and, as it was, she seemed to run the risk of being discoloured for life. But it was a light put out, and the world of science has lost by it, there is no doubt. He was a droll little fellow—only seven when he first came to school, with a shrill voice, and a tendency to dreaming. I am not sure if it was he, or a boy still more dreamy, of whom Maggie used to relate, that she went into his room one morning, and found

him sitting on the side of his little bed, quite disconsolate and puzzled. He was dressed entirely, necktie and all, but he had forgotten his knickerbockers. "There seems something wrong, Maggie, but I can't think what it is," was the greeting. How Maggie laughed when she told this story!

His first exploit at school was to attack a hornets' nest, built in the hollow of a willow. He brought in a specimen or two wriggling at the end of a stick, and he wanted one to be sent to his mother, by post, marked "This side up. With care." He was very persistent about this, but it was thought better not, as she was rather nervously inclined. We were not supposed to attack hornets' nests, or even wasps', but it was hard to resist. We elder boys were allowed to go out with the gardener, and take a wasps' nest at night sometimes; this was a great treat, but a very rare one.

CHAPTER V.

A CRICKET MATCH.

OF course the great event of the year was cricket, and our summer matches were the happiest of all happy excitements.

The first summer term I was at school, we were challenged by a school not far from us ; they were bigger and older boys than ourselves, and we were pretty easily beaten. Still our defeat seemed rather due to some accidental circumstances, and we longed to have another chance against them.

Miss Mary was almost as eager as we were, and on the 15th of July the return match was to be played.

The weather had been dry for a fortnight, and our ground was not in good order. Cart-

loads of water were thrown upon it; the turf had to be taken up, and then put down again. Then more rolling, and more watering.

These delightful preparations were plain to be seen from the schoolroom windows. How we gloried in them, and in the sunshine, which gave promise of a fine day on the morrow!

Lessons over in the evening, we inspected the ground with Miss Mary. Was it good enough? Was it as good as our antagonists' ground? Would they grumble, and think little of it? We stepped over it carefully, as if we expected it to give way under our feet. It was firm and level to our tread. A little fellow rashly bowled a ball down it. He was snubbed at once. It looked disrespectful to put our new ground to that reckless use.

Miss Mary was not satisfied. She walked to and fro, and shook her head. The gardener was sent for, and we were delighted. It seemed as if no ground could be good enough for our game, if *that* was defective.

It was happiness indeed to hear Miss Mary and the gardener talk. He thought the ground

would do (just like him, to think anything would do), but Miss Mary would not hear of it, and at 4 a.m. to-morrow there was to be more watering and more rolling.

The importance of the whole matter, the hope of victory, the feeling that it was impossible to go to bed, lest something unforeseen should happen in the night and put a stop to the match, kept our excitement at the highest pitch.

“Oh, if only we might spend the night on the field, and keep watch over the ground !”

By degrees we calmed down to boundless content. Everything seemed to combine in our favour, and we stayed out in the dewy field till the stars shone in the sky.

The captain was the quietest amongst us, and as he walked up and down with Miss Mary, he sought to gain confidence for himself by drawing out hers. He was not very hopeful of success ; he knew the weak points of his own field, and the strong points of the Bradon boys' play.

Miss Mary's tone about it reassured him greatly. “Above all,” she urged him, “be very quiet with your men. Spare no pains yourself ;

keep your eye on the field, but show each one that you trust him to do his best in the place assigned him. It is only a game after all, and, whether we win or lose, we shall all do our very best."

Bedtime would come, and though we were quite certain we shouldn't sleep, we had to go to bed. We begged that our blinds might be left up, so that the first gleam of dawn should wake us, and we lay staring at the twinkling stars till the last minute.

In the morning, when we awoke, we found that our windows had been carefully darkened, and the first getting-up bell was ringing. The all-important day was actually here, and had found us fast asleep!

"How do you feel, captain?" we shouted across to John's room.

"Feel?" was the answer. "I feel that we shall beat 'em. And I say, you fellows, just look and see what a morning it is. Cloudless sunshine!" An ill-suppressed "hurrah!" went through the rooms. It was desirable to make the most of our opportunities, and we practised round-arm

bowling with our sponges, and brushes for bats. The enemies' wickets went down very fast indeed.

Oh dear! what a long time it was till two o'clock! What tedious interval of parsing, lessons, and construing before the longed-for hour could come! How should we get through it?

Well, one great comfort was, that we could keep an eye on the ground all through school-time. We upper boys were in luck. The window of the class-room where the younger boys worked, looked out the other way. At eleven o'clock, when we had ten minutes' freedom from school, the little ones rushed in, to find if anything fresh were stirring.

John had his eleven close round him, asking him questions about their play. To one, he advised caution; to another, dash. "Beware of long-hops." "Don't slog at everything." These and kindred bits of advice were going round.

The great event of the day had elevated him to a hero. Every word that he uttered had the flavour of an oracular saying.

12.30. School was nearly over, and consider-

ing how our thoughts were taken up by other and more important matters, we had done well.

Now for a final inspection of the ground. How hot it was ! "The very best weather for cricket !" we said ; and the ground was splendid. Miss Mary joined us. She stepped the whole length of the ground in silence, whilst we looked anxiously on. "Come, boys, this will do." At that moment our satisfaction was at its highest.

Dinner was to be a light meal, and the captain regulated the number of helps for the eleven, generously remarking that the others might eat what they liked.

The Bradon boys were to come at two. How slowly the hands of the clock moved that day !

We lingered about in the shade, watching eagerly. Dust ! wheels ! horses ! Yes ! there they were ! A great waggonette full of boys ! We set up a hearty cheer, and if some of us thought they looked terribly big strong fellows, we shook hands, and exchanged remarks, as if we thought them comfortably small, and easy to be beaten.

Chairs were placed for the spectators under

the shade of a line of elm trees, that ran down the side of the field, and little tables for the scorers out of reach of the talk.

The two elevens were inspecting the ground. Certainly the Bradon boys grew bigger and bigger. A brother of John's was so small, that a laugh was raised at his being in the eleven at all. Two of his size would not make one Bradon boy certainly; but we knew that, when play was in question, little Kenneth wanted neither pluck nor skill, as the sequel shows.

Well, the toss was won by the Bradon boys, to our satisfaction. Hamilton and Black were the first to go in. Hamilton, a big fellow, with something quite disheartening about the cut of his legs. Somebody said he looked like a "slashing buccaneer," so perhaps somebody knew what a slashing buccaneer was like. Anyhow, he looked as if he could slog the balls over the heads of the tallest trees.

But it soon became plain that John's slow underhand balls puzzled him sorely; he could make nothing of them. They got a few runs from Willie's balls, and we trembled when we

saw how Hamilton punished them. A four and a three in one over! It made Johnnie desperate, though cautious, and before the next over was finished Black's bails were sent flying.

A short, thick-set, obstinate-looking little fellow—Rogers—now went in and stuck in. John wisely changed bowlers. The score was mounting up. Hamilton had twenty-three, Rogers eleven, when he was neatly caught at "long on."

John now returned to the bowling, and Hamilton was bowled second ball.

How our fellows cheered, till John's peremptory "Hold your row!" stopped them!

I must continue the account as if the match were being played at the present time.

Now their captain is going in. He is evidently not quite comfortable. He and Hamilton exchange a few words (in passing), which don't increase his confidence. "That fellow's balls are just——" Here follows a strong word in vogue amongst boys. "They twist most awfully." This was overheard; and advice not to attempt to hit them followed.

However, the second ball is too tempting to be resisted. It is missed, and the off stump is out of the ground.

The captain out with a duck!

We are quite sorry for him, and glad of John's prohibition about cheering.

The telegraph is up. Three wickets down for thirty-four. After this the score creeps up slowly. An easy catch muffed at point, and the last wicket goes down for ninety-two.

Our innings does not open splendidly. The score is three when Ralph goes in. We know he will do nothing. He began cricket late, and has never made a score yet; but to our amazement he treats the balls as they deserve. A splendid hit to leg gives four runs. It is impossible to restrain the cheer that rises from the lookers-on. Nobody is so amazed as Ralph himself, he never played like it in his life before. He is caught, having scored fourteen runs. Two wickets, twenty-seven.

Willie succeeds him, conscious that his scarf is *the* thing on the field.

"Don't slog," says John, emphatically.

"All right."

"Play!" cries the umpire.

Off go the bails. That is serious. We had counted on Willie's play; no one could make a better score, when steady.

We are all getting down, and the young ones crowd round Willie to show all possible sympathy, and to let him know it was the fault of bat, ball, stumps, bails, and not his own, that he is out. He looks vexed, and his scarf is no comfort at the moment.

Now John goes in, and a slight cheering is heard. Nothing upsets him, steady old fellow that he is.

Three maiden overs. John is cautious; but now at last he begins to hit—nothing very tremendous. He never makes more than a two; but he takes it so steadily, and plays with such quiet confidence.

Arthur is stumped, and little Ken, John's brother, goes in. Everybody laughs to see such a mite; he is not much bigger than the bat he holds with such an air. The bowler is disposed to be merciful, but only for a very short time;

he soon sees how Ken handles the balls, and that he is the captain's own brother.

The score gets up between them. They are our last hope.

John keeps in to the end of the innings, making twenty-nine off his own bat. Our score ninety to their ninety-two.

The second innings our adversaries make seventy-nine.

We are hopeful, but by no means confident.

Our side goes in again. This time Willie means mischief. His balls fly among the guests ; one, right across the avenue into the next field for five. His innings is the most brilliant of the day, but it is short ; he scores fifteen only.

Arthur goes in and is caught. John follows, and loses his wicket. Eighteen to tie, nineteen to win.

That is the score, and we have lost hope. Little Ken is our only dependence, and he is a forlorn hope, because we have no one to match him.

But he holds on bravely, and one after another of the little fellows goes in and comes out ; and

now, eight wickets down, we are seven to tie and eight to win.

If only Ken can hold out!

A little fellow of nine goes in; he is short-sighted, but plucky.

Every eye is on the two little players. They look so tiny, hedged round by the tall Bradon boys. The excitement grows intense. Every ball is cheered. Even the spectators leave their seats, and stand, watching eagerly. Poor John! I thought he would go crazy. "Steady! steady!" he calls out, as every ball is hit at.

Now it is a tie. Ball after ball passes the wicket. Little Owen hits to mid-wicket. The rashest, most foolish run; but little Ken runs. The ball is thrown to the wicket-keeper, and before it can be thrown to the other wicket our man is in. The day is ours, and two wickets to spare.

How hot and tired and happy we were! And now the captain allowed his men some refreshment. Throughout the game he had forbidden this; a little cold water, if they were very thirsty, was his only concession. Ginger-beer corks had

been flying about, cake and biscuits tempting the boys on all sides, but not a crumb might the eleven touch till the game was over.

Then came a spread under the trees, to which we all sat down. There was but one opinion about the day, and but one verdict uttered in boy language—"Awfully jolly." The Bradon boys had counted on winning because we were such little fellows, so they were a little vexed at first; but the "spread" soon settled all that, and we were on very pleasant terms directly.

Tea over, we wandered all about the place, to visit gardens, orchard, schoolrooms, and exchange our experiences, till the Bradon boys drove away.

We cheered them lustily, and kept it up as long as we could hear the sound of their wheels. John and Miss Mary sat out in the front garden a long time discussing the events of the day, whilst the other boys were fighting the battles over again; and, just before the bell rang for prayers, Miss Mary was heard to say, "Well, but, after all, glad as I am that we won the

match, what pleased me best was to see how quiet and steady the boys were, even when our prospects looked darkest ; no one could have seen, from their play, whether the game went for them or against them. They played with steady courage throughout, and took their winning quietly, without bragging. I think, Johnnie, your men behaved well."

John knew well that more was meant than was really conveyed in words, and his eyes twinkled with pleasure. He made no answer, but a happier captain of an eleven did not exist in "merrie" England.

We put in a plea to miss early school, but Miss Mary said "no ; the bell would ring as usual." There was a slight murmur, as we were very tired ; but Miss Mary said, if play were allowed to interfere with work, she would be the first to give up the play. We had all had our holiday, and had enjoyed it heartily, and work would go on just as usual.

It was hard to turn out the next morning, some of us were so stiff and tired.

The first lesson was Greek Testament, and

Miss Mary saw at a glance one or two very sulky faces at the desks.

"Are you very tired?" she asked.

"Oh yes, awfully tired!"

"So am I," said Miss Mary, "I could hardly get out of bed, the excitement tires one so. I would gladly have had a rest, but it would not be right to make two holidays out of one. So let us all help each other through the morning as best we can, we are all in the same case. Let us have bright faces and cheery work, yesterday was worth a little fatigue."

We saw by her looks that she was very tired, and the sulky faces cheered up, and after-breakfast work went on as usual.

I think Miss Mary was not quite as hard as usual over a false quantity, and gave us a little more help over our Cæsar.

CHAPTER VI.*

HORATIUS.

HORATIUS is a wood-pigeon. We found him one evening in May, as we drove down the hill by the forest ; he had tumbled from his nest, and had evidently scrambled along the ground. We could not see any nest on the tall trees near ; there were some boys, however, and fearing they might seize the pretty fellow, we took him up. He was fully fledged, and a very beautiful bird. He struggled and fluttered at first, but the warmth of my hand soon quieted him, and he sat quite still, blinking his eyes thoughtfully for the rest of the drive.

* The two following chapters are not, as the previous ones, written from a boy's point of view, but are the author's own account of certain passing incidents.

A very few days' acquaintance proves to us that Horatius has not one redeeming quality. His character is morose and revengeful, he is apathetic and sulky, and no consideration of peas, fresh water, or coaxing produces the least effect on him. We put his cage in the garden, and he resents it; we hang him up in the porch, where he can see the little chickens, and raise the tone of his mind by contemplating the works of nature generally, and the swallows particularly, but he resents that. He won't look at the chickens, and he winks contemptuously at the swallows. One little bird flies towards him every now and then, as if pitying his loneliness: she is so happy, darting to and fro in mighty preparation for the little eggs soon to be laid. Horatius wishes she would mind her own business, and thinks, if he had a chance of building, it should not be so near the haunts of twenty noisy boys. Give him the top of a tall tree, he doesn't like boys. Well, perhaps he has his reasons. If the wood-pigeons brought to us for sale were his relations, he has grounds for mistrusting boys. Such miserable specimens they

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were—maimed, lame, and blind ! It was hard not to buy and kill them ; but we would not allow the boys to do this, because it would incite the other young ruffians to get more. We discouraged all commerce of this kind ; and dear as the delight of tree-climbing and birds'-nesting is to every well brought up boy, this pleasure may be enjoyed reverently, and the birds spared suffering.

Early in our school career a very sweet old lady, whose eyes would swim at the mere thought of unkindness to any dumb thing, made us a grand remonstrance on this very subject. "It's all of no use, my dear ; boys are just a dispensation of Providence for keeping down birds. It's all in the order of nature, and if we interfere with *that*, why, where are we ?" There was more energy than logic in that, we thought, and we would not give up a hope we had, that boys could be taught to love and reverence these helpless creatures, and find as much pleasure in helping and cherishing, as they seem disposed to find in tormenting them. Our old friend laughed at us, but we knew with whom we

had to deal, for a story was current about her and her sister, which they neither of them could deny. They had a fat, comfortable pony, called Charlie. The old coachman was ordered to bring him round in the pony-carriage at three o'clock one afternoon. The ladies were dressed and waiting. A message was brought in: "Would the ladies speak to the coachman?" They went out. "Did you mean, ma'am, as the carriage was to be brought round, whether or no? because, you see, Charlie is fast asleep." "We can wait till he wakes up," was the prompt reply; and that day the ladies walked, for Charlie slept on.

So Horatius goes sulking on. Sometimes I fancy his life may be wanting in emotion, so I leave him dinnerless an hour or two, that he may feel the sensation of hunger and the pleasure of satisfying it. But he feels no hunger and no pleasure. Every feeding-time is a scene of strife and recrimination. He strikes at my hand when I take him out of his cage—good hard blows too, with his wings; yet he can take no food but what I put down his throat.

He is brought to my bedside at seven every morning. Oh, how sleepy I am, and how I wish Horatius in his native woods again! I feed him in his own despite. Grievously empty though his crop is, he flutters and strikes at me throughout the meal.

How unlike my Pyramus and Thisbe! So tender were their beaks that we had to bite the peas in half for them. But they never saw us, or heard the familiar rattle of peas in the biscuit-tin, without uttering little squeaks of delight, and shaking their wings to express their hunger. Even if just fed they always did this, and they would take our fingers so gently into their beaks, with quite a caressing movement.

They did not behave very well later about their eggs. There were two pairs by that time, and they threw the eggs about on the floor, and pretended not to know who had laid them; nobody would own to them or sit upon them, or pay the least heed to them for a minute. From the point of view of pies, our pigeons were a great failure; nor were they a good example to the neighbourhood from a moral point of view;

and we gave them up. At least, they gave us up, and ran away in wrong couples. This was painful and surprising, and we have done with pigeons, except, of course, the bailiff's, who devote themselves most kindly to us and our newly sown peas, and seem disposed, by their great constancy, to make amends for past disappointments.

The only sign of feeling ever displayed by Horatius was his great eagerness to get free. Quite incapable of any sentiment of gratitude, he did not attempt to conceal or soften his great wish to be out of our hands.

This state of things lasted about a month, when one Sunday morning, to my great joy, I saw that Horatius could pick up peas for himself. I opened the window and his cage door, and away he flew, not once looking back or making any sign of thanks.

We never saw him again. Whether he fell an early victim to ill temper, and died of hunger because he was too surly to feed, or whether he airs his ill humour on the top of some tall tree, and recounts sulkily his early experiences to

a wife and family, I know not. Of this I feel sure, that Horatius' disposition is not calculated to make any home happy. Hard was captivity to him, no doubt; but, then, why not love cheerfully these lessons of adversity which we all have to learn, whether we are birds or human beings?

Let us hope for Horatius, that his youthful sorrows have not been in vain, and that he now shines amongst wood-pigeons as a warning and an example.

CHAPTER VII.

CINDERELLA.

THIS evening the youngest of our boys acted Cinderella, and the schoolroom (or elder) boys came into the class-room as audience. They were much impressed with the powers of our young ones.* It *was* very impressive altogether.

The first scene was Cinderella, looking grubby, and banging away at the fireplace with a very black, sweepish-looking brush. This was Willie. A standing order against touching fire-irons, or playing with fire, was a sad and chronic grievance with him; so to-night he determined to make the most of his temporary privilege, and he banged and stoked and swept till we could hardly

* The average age of the actors was about seven years, and the dialogue was their own.

see across the room. The audience sneezed grievously. It was quite a relief when the sisters came tumbling in presently, and scolded Cinderella for being so dirty and unpresentable generally, and announced that they were going immediately to a ball, where the prince had invited them.

I had better mention in this place that the *personæ* of our little drama always came in headlong, so to speak, by reason of their unaccustomed legs getting entangled in their long gowns. They picked each other up quite deftly, one by one; but the tumbling tended to disarrange the ideas they had just received from the prompter, who stood outside, and coached each one as he came in.

In their commendable zeal to do honour to his instructions, they generally brought out what they had to say before they were quite picked up, and this gave their conversation a very jerky and uncertain effect.

Willie so mistrusted his own legs, that in his sweeping and poking operations he generally sat upon the floor; yet, as he was the first

dressed of the little company, he had enjoyed opportunities of practising his steps, and had availed himself of them.

"How dreadful it must be to be a girl!" was his comment. "I wonder how they ever get upstairs?"

This very practical inquiry kept Willie on the move till the signal to begin was given, and to the ill success of this quest we may attribute a certain bruised and dishevelled effect which pursued him through the piece. However, he found that the only safe method of walking was to clutch at his garments with both hands, and move in short leaps, as we see in a sack-race; but he tumbled about a good deal, in spite of all his precautions.

But to return to Cinderella. She rose to her feet when the cross sisters came in; the eldest sister was very cross indeed, and wishing to emphasize an order "to be sure and have tea" for them when they came home from the ball, she touched Cinderella, who rolled over like a ninepin.

Willie's legs now revealed the whole plot, for there, upon one foot, was the white slipper ready

for the ball. The sight of that slipper convinced us that all would go smoothly, and that every trifling detail of the drama would be respected. But it was a pity Willie showed himself so much amazed at an arrangement to which he must have been a party. His surprise at the sight of his transfigured legs quite lost him his presence of mind, and he sat staring at them as if he had never seen them before.

Even the implacable sister forgot her indignation, and stood by, staring silently, as if it were in the part she had to perform; while the second sister, whose get-up was an astonishment, and who always echoed the eldest sister, took her part in the silence.

There was apparently no more to be said, so they went away to dress for the ball. From the undignified way in which they scuttled out, it was clear they had no time to lose.

When they were gone, Cinderella picked up her brush again, and began upon the poor battered grate, pausing from time to time to say she *would* go to the ball, and that her sisters were "nasty things."

Knowing as we did all that Cinderella had gone through, we did not feel she could be made a fit subject for a ball.

At this moment a good deal of scuffling took place outside the door, accompanied by urgent entreaties to "go in," met apparently with resistance ; and presently in came godmother, with a very tall hat, made of brown paper, and a stick in her hand. She kindly poked at Cinderella, who was on the floor.

That petulant lady was disposed to retaliate with her brush, but she showed no surprise, so perhaps her godmother often called.

It may perhaps seem odd to our readers, but throughout the whole piece nobody ever was surprised at anything, which shows how well up they were in the incidents.

"What do you want, Cinderella?" asked godmother.

"I want to go with my sisters to the ball."

"So you shall, Cinderella," said godmother.

"Oh!" said Cinderella.

"On your bed lies a dress ready for you," said godmother.

"Oh!" said Cinderella, and off she went to look for it.

But now poor little godmother looked puzzled. She knew more ought to have been said, and she had not said it. So, after staring at the coal-scuttle a little while, she went out to consult the prompter as to what was best to be done under these unforeseen circumstances.

There was nothing for it but to retrace their steps. So Cinderella came back, and they got as far as the pumpkin and rice arrangement, and then Cinderella went out again, leaving poor godmother still perplexed. "There now!" said the kind old lady, whose memory seemed excellent for forgetting, "I quite forgot to tell Cinderella about getting home when the clock strikes twelve; that's a pity."

We could only hope that the prompter would see to this, and make all matters straight.

The next scene was the ball. Two delays occurred at this time. One was occasioned by the eldest sister demanding a change in her head-dress; the other, a sudden attack of hunger on the part of the prince. This proved

more easy than the demand of the sister, and a hunch of bread was soon in the prince's hand, and so the play went on.

This was the prince's first appearance, and he came in—happy fellow !—in full possession of his legs, and holding his head up bravely, as a prince should.

Cinderella was radiant in white muslin, and came in so skilfully, that she only made one little lurch ; but that one lurch was too much for her head-dress, which fell to the ground, and was crushed underfoot. It was a simple paper arrangement, and its loss no detriment to the splendour of the ball. The sisters were wonderfully dressed, and the eldest did not demean herself by any inconsistencies of courtesy or suavity.

The prince put his hands in his pockets when his bread was finished. "What shall we do ?" he said. "I vote we dance." As if a ball were invented for any other amusement !

"Oh yes !" said the eldest sister. "Prince, *do* dance with me." This, it appears, is the etiquette at court, but it put out of the prince's head, the admiration he ought to have shown for

Cinderella, whom as yet he had not looked at. So they danced. "I feel so excited," said the eldest sister, sinking into a chair. Then the prince made his best bow to Cinderella, and they danced together.

The prompter undertook the musical arrangements, which were of the very simplest character.

Scarcely had the prince and Cinderella taken one turn, when a sound was heard that seemed to fall like magic upon the actors. A bell chimed twelve. It was the familiar school-bell, adapted to the purpose.

"Can it be tea or school?" they thought; and they trod upon each other's gowns, rushing to the door in a scared fashion. Happily, the prompter was prepared for anything or everything.

"Let Cinderella go home," said a deep voice.

I have forgotten to say, that in one pause in the dancing the prince had asked his partner, with winning frankness, what her name was, and where she lived.

She replied at once about her name, but when he pressed the other question, said she had not the least idea where she lived. The motive of

this bold statement did not transpire, and as the prince seemed to find it quite natural, no further notice was taken.

At the prompter's awful warning, Cinderella fled out, the prince on her heels, or rather on her skirts.

This was a most exciting moment for the audience, as the slipper had been forgotten, and it was impossible to see how the play could end with any historical exactness. Again the prompter came to the rescue, and the slipper came flying into the room, sent by an unseen hand. Now we could breathe freely, and again give our minds to the drama.

Then the prince came back, looking very calm, with his hands in his pockets, and asked the eldest sister who that lady was. The sister did not know ; she had never seen her before. "I think she is quite beautiful," said the prince ; "I feel pretty certain she is a princess." The eldest sister said she should not wonder if she were, but showed no great interest in the discussion.

They had nothing more to talk about, and as

the prompter was outside, they showed a great desire to go to him ; indeed he was the great comfort and support of their lives.

So they all turned out, the prince passing over the slipper and not seeing it. He was sent back to fetch it, but though he dutifully picked it up, he did not know what to do with it, and we distinctly heard the prompter say, "Come out." This he was delighted to do at all times, and luckily he took the slipper with him, the audience clapping lustily.

The last scene was very short. A youth made his first appearance as king's herald, and as he had the slipper in his hand, we knew the *dénouement* was coming.

But the herald looked at Cinderella, and looked at her sisters, and did not know what to say or do.

So he ran out to the prompter, and came back primed to this effect : "Oh yes ! Oh yes ! The prince intends to marry this slipper." ("No, the lady," the prompter put in from the distance.) "Oh yes ! intends to marry the lady who fits this slipper."

"I know it will just fit me," said the first sister, seating herself promptly in the only chair the *ménage* afforded. No, it did not. The second sister tried ; but, as we know, again it did not fit.

And now the first sister outdid herself ; for when the herald asked, "Is there nobody else to try the slipper?" she spread out her garments, as in the game of "Fox and Goose," and danced in front of Cinderella, to prevent her being seen. The herald, who was not very sharp-sighted, would certainly have gone away with the slipper in his hand, but for Cinderella's persistence. She dodged her eldest sister so effectively that she gained the chair at last, and no doubt the slipper fitted remarkably, like Gilpin's friend's wig, by dint of being much "too big."

By this time the prince found himself tired of lounging about in the passage, and proposed to the prompter that he should now come in and see after matters a little. This was only reasonable ; and when he saw Cinderella seated on the chair he said, without the least surprise, "That is the princess."

"That it *isn't*!" said the first sister, very snappishly; "that's Cinderella!" The second sister supported the statement. "She was at the ball last night," said the prince.

"That she wasn't," said number one, "for we told her she wasn't to go. She is such a dirty little thing, and she cleans the grates and things." The second sister again ratified this revelation of their household economies.

"But I did go to the ball," said Cinderella, enjoying her sisters' mortifications, and smiling all over her face. "Then more shame for you," snapped the eldest sister; "it was very impolite of you, Cinderella, when we told you not to go." "Yes, it was," said the second sister, mildly.

The prince did not know what to say next, and Cinderella cast longing looks at her black brush, and the grate she had not touched lately. There was nothing for it but to consult the prompter.

Then his highness came back to Cinderella, who still kept the chair, and her slipped foot stretched out as if it came at the end of a wooden leg.

"You are to come away to the palace directly to be married," said the prince, offering his hand.

"All right," said Cinderella, tumbling off the chair into her skirt. And away they went.

It seemed a little abrupt, but no doubt manners were abrupt in that age.

We all clapped vigorously, and the company came back, stood in a row, and bowed their acknowledgments. And so ended Cinderella.

THE END.

In Memoriam

B. H., JANUARY 9, 1880.

FAREWELL ! we leave asleep in holy ground
The outward frame which cased thine inner self,
And mirrored to us what we knew of thee—
Thy years not full, although thy work be done.

No children pressed around thy dying bed,
To call thee mother, yet are far and wide
Those who as more than mother reckon thee,
Since from thy loving lips and faithful life
They learned the lesson they had missed at home.
For, bright with youth's fresh spring, their tender hearts,
As yet unhardened in the whirl of life,
By sin unseared, nor dulled to lethargy,
Received the impress of thine influence.
Forth from thy mind there shone both full and clear
The light of faith, by holy musings fed,
Thy life's main, all-pervading principle.
Within thy breast there glowed a fire of love,
Whose heavenward course stayed never but to cast
Into the depths of some chill sister soul
A flashing glow, to spread its fervour there.
While, linked to these, a hidden source of power,
An intimate soul-scanning sympathy
Could hearts unlock, to make them closely thine.

'Twas thine to use these gifts God's truth to teach,
Training young souls for life in His own way,

To greet Him present in His mysteries,
And round His altar breathe their simple prayer.
No selfish business, but a God-taught art,
No drudging labour, but a work of love.
The slender frame, high-wrought and tightly strung,
Responsive to each atmospheric change
Might failing shrink ; yet energy of will,
Flecked with the aspirations of bright hope,
And grace-empowered, would brace it up to meet
With nerve renewed and cheery readiness
The call of duty or necessity.

Deep interest in the heroes of old days
Nor love of ancient lore had won thy heart
From those yet higher truths, whose glorious sound
Hath consecrated those hoar tongues of old
As instruments of nobler work, to tell
Of grander and yet more heroic deeds.
For dearer still thou heldest the enchanting strains
Of him who was their more than heritor,
And 'neath the sunny skies of Italy
Hath wedded to his never-dying words
The music of that life of Paradise,
Wherein, God grant it, mayest thou now have share.
What, though at last no sacraments were given
To fortify thee for the shadowy vale?
Year after year thou hadst laid up a store
To be thy sustenance ;—and in His love
Thy Lord would grant thee thine Epiphany
No longer hid 'neath veils of mystery
But fully opened to the spirit's sense.

And thus a mercifully sudden blow
Hath rent our hearts, but given thee thy rest.

J. E. S.

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the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased by 1.5 million, and the number of people aged 75 and over has increased by 1.2 million (Office for National Statistics 1999). The number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase to 6.5 million by 2011, and the number of people aged 75 and over to 4.5 million (Office for National Statistics 1999).

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the health and social care needs of older people, and a number of initiatives have been launched to address this need. The Department of Health has launched the 'Ageing Well' campaign, which aims to help older people to live well and to remain independent. The campaign includes a range of initiatives, including the 'Age Well' website, which provides information and advice on a range of issues affecting older people, and the 'Age Well' helpline, which provides a free telephone service for older people and their families.

The 'Age Well' campaign is part of a wider initiative to improve the health and social care of older people, known as the 'Age Well' strategy. The strategy was launched in 1999 and sets out a range of measures to improve the health and social care of older people, including the need to improve the quality of care, to increase the number of health and social care professionals working with older people, and to improve the coordination of services.

The 'Age Well' strategy is a key document in the development of health and social care for older people in the UK. It sets out a range of measures to improve the health and social care of older people, and it provides a framework for the development of services for older people. The strategy is a key document in the development of health and social care for older people in the UK.

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